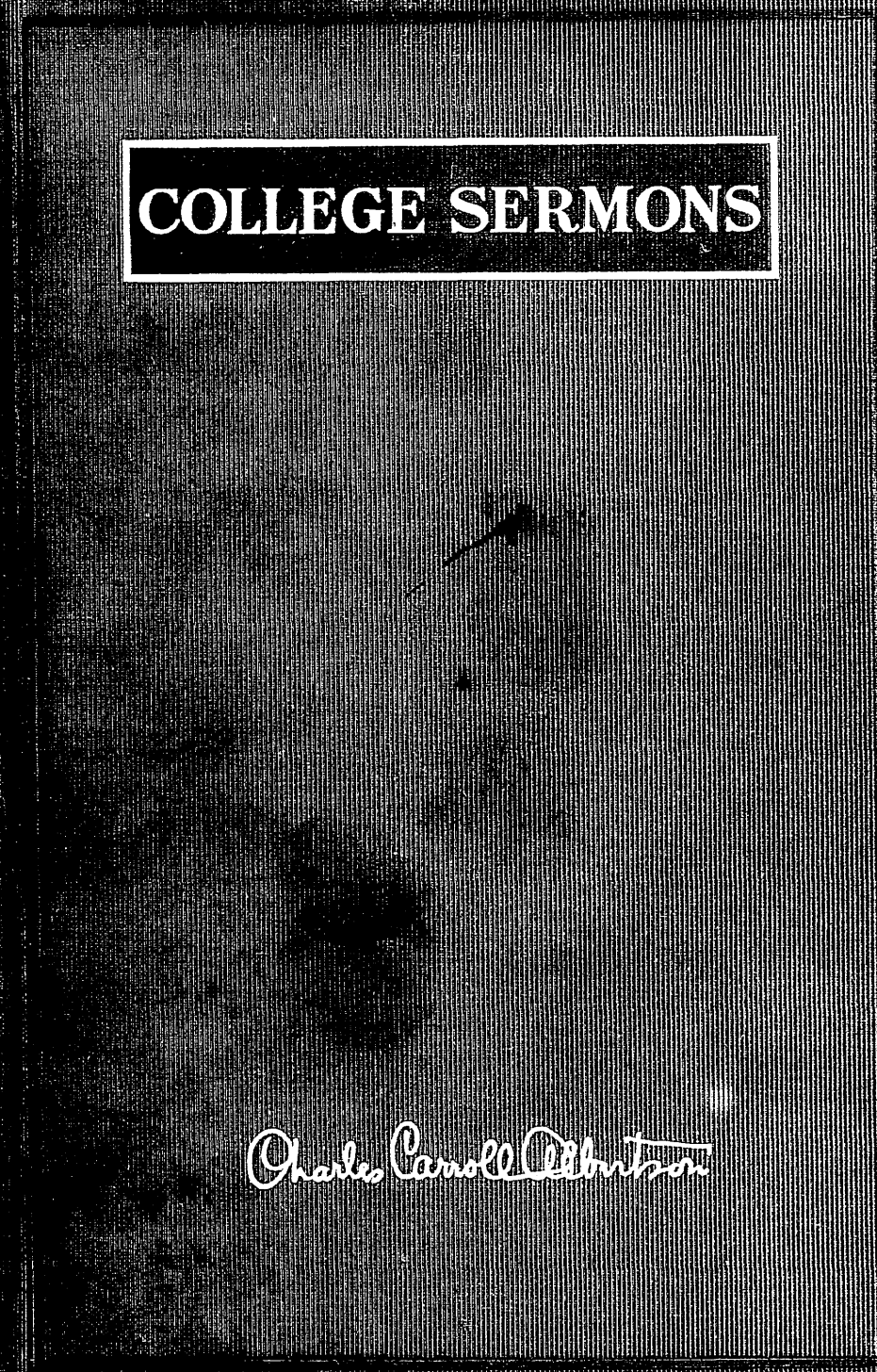
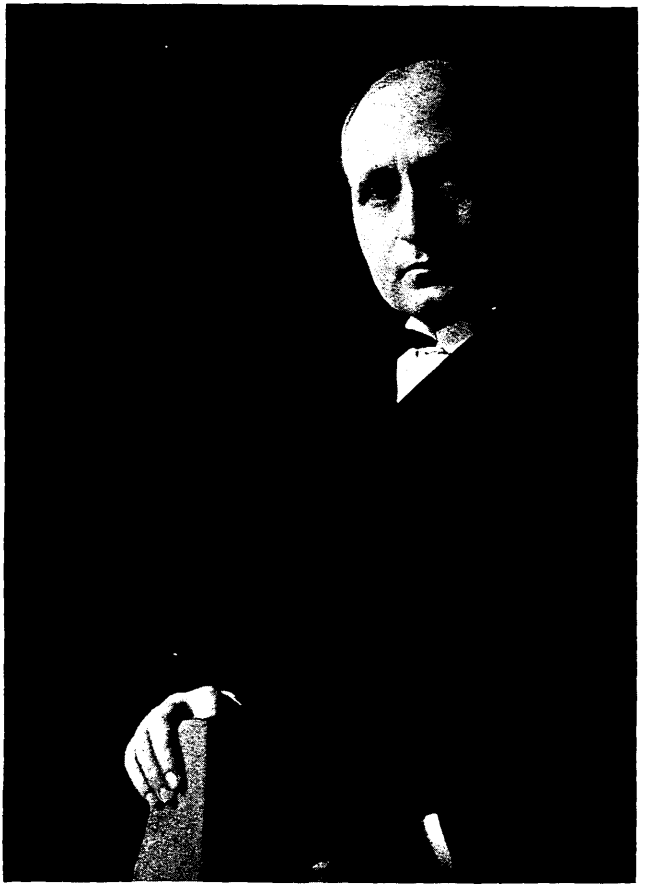
COLLEGE SERMONS



Charles Carroll Albertson



Charles Carroll Albertson

With
Author's
Compliments
to Dr. Harry Pratt Judson.
1—26—1910.

COLLEGE SERMONS

CHARLES CARROLL ALBERTSON
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AUTHOR'S NOTE

No part of the author's ministry has been more pleasurable than the frequent opportunity to address the students of various colleges and universities. The sermons included in this book have been preached in recent years at Cornell University, the University of Pennsylvania, the Woman's College of Baltimore, Princeton University, Syracuse University, and Vassar College. Two of the briefer sermons were delivered at the afternoon service at Cornell, at which the speaker is limited to fifteen minutes. Two of the sermons were preached on the Day of Prayer for Colleges, and one on the evening of Commencement Day, before the college Christian Association.

C. C. A.

I

THE SUPREMACY OF THE UNSEEN

"When in the secret place of our soul we build our God, we form Him not out of cosmic forces, not out of gravitation and chemical attraction, but out of holiness and love. And, lo! as we look, the form is as of the Son of Man! The Absolute as Absolute is not enough for the religious life. Man must have some fixed, visible point, some crystallization, as it were, of the All on which his love and reverence may rest. That is where the New Testament story meets him. Here he finds the humanizing and personalizing of the Infinite Goodness. In the study of this Life he tastes eternity. And as he believes, the power to be good flows into him. Therefore knows he to-day the Christ, not only as human, but also as Divine; not only as a figure in history, but as the eternal Now.

" 'God may have other Words for other worlds,
But for this world the Word of God is Christ.' "

(*Ourselves and the Universe.* J. Brierly. pp. 300, 301.)

COLLEGE SERMONS

I

THE SUPREMACY OF THE UNSEEN

"We look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen." II. Cor. iv. 18.

It is difficult for us to determine the dominant moral quality of our own age. We are too near it —too much a part of it. We are like soldiers in a battle. We know a little of the topography of the ground over which we fight, advancing or retreating, but of the great plan of the battle, and of the greater campaign, of which the battle is a part, we know nothing until the campaign is ended, and becomes a matter of history.

It takes time to read history aright. One says, "This is an age of sin," and another, "An age of doubt." Probably it is both. One of our most brilliant essayists says, "Commercially it is an age of advertisement; socially, it is an age of publicomania; physically, it is an age of nerves; politically, it is an age of democracy." Another says, "It is an age of speed—its motto is 'Accelerate!' " But do we not include it all when we say, "It is an age of devotion to the material"?

What are our favorite mottoes? "One world at a time is enough." We have to thank agnosticism for that. "Seeing is believing." Whom have we to thank for that? Oh, we all say that. It has become a proverb, that is, a proved truth! And yet, calling it so does not make it so. It may be a sophism, a thing that appears true, but is not, a falsehood masquerading as truth.

President Hadley of Yale said a year ago, "There are but three ideals of life for us to choose from—the Stoic, the Epicurean, and the Christian." Two of these, the Stoic and the Epicurean, agree that one world at a time is enough, affirm that seeing is believing. Christianity alone challenges these sayings. Christianity says, "One world at a time is not enough—to say that it is, and to act as if it were, is 'planetary provincialism.'" Christianity says, "Seeing is not believing. Believing is seeing." And nowhere does it say so more plainly than in this text—"We look . . . at the things which are not seen."

It is a sad thing to be blind, never to see a flower or star, never to see the liquid emerald of the ocean or the gleaming sapphire of the setting sun; never to see one's own sweet mother's face! The deaf are unfortunate, never to hear the sound of wind among the pines, or of mountain streams falling over rocks, or the music of harp or viol or organ, or the sweeter music of the human voice! Pity those who are doomed to live in a world of total darkness or of silence! But more to be pitied are those who, "have eyes to see, and see not," and who

"have ears to hear, and hear not." Multitudes of people, not at all deficient in physical faculties, pass through the world blind to its beauty and deaf to its harmony. A woman once said to Mr. Turner, who could put an almost infinite expanse of sky into a square foot of canvas, "I never saw a sky like that!" And he replied, "I suppose not, but don't you wish you could?"

Much knowledge as we gain through our senses, there is a vast universe of reality which no physical sense can comprehend. After we have seen everything visible, heard everything audible, touched everything tangible, weighed everything ponderable, experienced everything possible by means of nerves optic, auditory, olfactory, gustatory, sensory,—that is not all. Knowledge is not so limited as that. That would be a small world to live in. By far the largest part of our universe is beyond the range of sensuous apprehension.

Confronting the man whose creed is "Seeing is believing" is a man whose creed is "Believing is seeing." He is Paul. He believes in the invisible. He labors for invisible results. He prays to an invisible God. He endures as seeing an invisible Saviour. He feeds on invisible manna. He has meat to eat that men know not of. And by his side there stands an innumerable company of others. Here is Tennyson, singing, in "In Memoriam:"

> Strong Son of God, immortal Love,
> Whom we, that have not seen Thy face,
> By faith, and faith alone, embrace.

Here is Browning, triumphant, in "Paracelsus:"

> I see my way as birds their trackless way,—
> I shall arrive! • •

And here we stand this morning, repeating the Christian creed, "We look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen."

. . . . . .

That we may be certain of the reality of the unseen, and that we may have wherewith to answer those who boast of being sure of things material, let us be reminded of some forces with which we deal daily, not included in the catalogue of the visible.

First, consider how many of the purely physical forces of the universe are invisible,—gravity, electricity, chemical affinity, atmospheric pressure, and the like. We talk of the attraction of gravitation, and we know that it operates everywhere, but the force itself is so elusive that it was only a little while ago we discovered the law by which we measure it. We are familiar with the application of electricity to commerce and industry, but we know little of its nature. We have never seen it. We have seen a fiery finger thrust through a storm cloud, shattering an oak, or destroying a life as with the touch of an avenging angel; we have seen motion impelled by the force, but the force itself, like the glory of God, no man can look upon it and live. The most gifted electrical scientist of our day, was asked at a dinner, "What is electric-

ity?" And he replied, "It is a force about which we know absolutely nothing."

You can take two harmless substances, an acid and an oil, and produce a high explosive. What invincible energy was at work combining those atoms into a substance so different from either of its constituents? We call it chemical affinity.

The weight of the atmosphere upon this building is far greater than the weight of the building itself. But what is the atmosphere? What are those ether waves on which we send our wireless messages? The President of the British Society for the Advancement of Science once said, "Ether is the nominative case of the verb undulate." How very plain that makes it!

Now what is it that discovers these cosmic forces and employs them? It is evident there is something superior to gravity and electricity, for it takes gravity and electricity and harnesses them. We call it thought. But what is thought? It, too, forbids analysis. We can analyze the brain, but there is no trace of thought there. There are cells of living tissue there, each cell composed of three parts. The heart of the cell is composed of nutrient matter; this turns to formed matter, and formed matter changes to dead matter, and this is the vital process. But tissue from the brain of a frog reveals the same process. There is (to use the figure of Joseph Cook) a little invisible weaver at work in each cell, weaving the wonderful fabric of life, but what it is in the human brain that thinks—what it is in human life that writes poems,

and carves statues, and paints pictures, and composes orations, and strikes off constitutions, and plans the conquest of the earth and air—what it is that flashes intelligence under the sea, and over the continent, that tames the winds and waves, and nestles the lightning in its palm,—who knows? But that it is royal, creative, only a little short of omnipotent, who does not know?

We started with physical forces, impersonal, unconscious, blind, reasonless, but mighty. And we found something superior to these. Is there anything superior to thought?

There is. And we call it love. It is as much above thought, as thought is above gravity. It is to the soul what gravity is to the body. And yet it is so mysterious that we know less about it than we do of gravity. Sir Isaac Newton discovered the law that any two objects in the universe attract each other with a force that varies according to the inverse square of the distance that separates them. But it does not hold true that any two souls in the universe attract each other with a force that varies according to the inverse square of the distance that separates them!

But think of what love can do. Men live for it, suffer for it, die for it. How absurd—to live and suffer and die, inspired by an unseen power! Thought conquers steam and electricity, but love conquers thought. And thought becomes its humble slave! What boundless service, what uncalculating sacrifice, what absolute effacement of itself, love can evoke!

Cool, calculating reason is no match for love. Love laughs at reason as easily as at locksmiths! Who calls love unreal? A man crosses the continent to sit beside his gray-haired mother, and say, "Talk to me as you used to do—I am tired and I need your prayers." A mother exiles herself to a leper island to be the companion of her afflicted son. A family of Hungarian immigrants, a father and mother and six children, apply for admission to America at Ellis Island. A little farm in Wisconsin awaits them. The parents pass inspection, and five of the children, but one daughter is mentally deficient. These can remain. She must return to the land from which she came. And she returns—but not alone. They all go back. Love is stronger than hope—stronger than desire for land and liberty! When we remember how strong love is, we are not surprised that an Apostle declares, "God is love." It is an advance force of the Kingdom of Heaven.

But there is something stronger than love. It is conscience. We say the brain is the organ of thought. Sentimentally, the heart is the seat of love. Where is the throne of conscience? And what is conscience? All we know is that it is a tremendous reality, invisible, yet superior to love because it directs love toward worthy objects. He knew what conscience is who wrote:

> "I hear a voice you cannot hear,
> Which says I must not stay;
> I see a hand you cannot see,
> Which beckons me away."

An invisible hand, yet sceptering multitudes. An inaudible voice, yet coming up from inner depths with regal authority. Emerson wrote:

> So nigh is grandeur to our dust,
> So near is God to man.
> When Duty whispers low, Thou must,
> The youth replies, I can.

The "I must" of duty and the "I ought" of conscience are the same. It is what elevates life from the moment it is recognized and given dominion. It is the very ground of righteousness, the basis of character.

Here are two men. One died peacefully in his home, surrounded by an affectionate family, honoring them, and honored by them. His loss is deplored by the community. The world is poorer since he has gone, and heaven is surer and nearer. The other, too, is dead, but how and where? On the public highway, a bullet through his heart, a rifle in his hand, curses on his lips—shot down like a wild beast, in his flight from a plundered bank. Shot down as he should have been. An outlaw and a public enemy.

Now what is the difference between these men? One cherished conscience, kept it void of offense toward God and man, recognized in it his kinship to the Divine. The other put away conscience, heard but did not heed the voice of stillness, and died as he lived, a bandit. Strange, is it not, that such a difference is attributable to the presence in one, and the absence from the other, of an entirely invisible power?

We have ascended. We have seen the forces of nature about us, and have found something in the realm of mind called thought, that subdues them. We have found something in the moral realm called love, that controls thought, and something in the same realm that governs love. At last we come to the realm of the spirit and find a force as much superior to conscience as conscience is superior to love, or love to thought, or thought to gravitation. Thought masters physical energy. Love commands thought. Conscience conquers love. And faith enlightens and vitalizes conscience. We have reached the summit of the pyramid. We are not far from God. We are in the presence of God. We work with God and God works with us. For faith takes hold on God—touches the healing hem of His garment. Nothing is holier, nothing higher, nothing mightier, than this. What is it? The Apostle tells us: "Faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen."

Think of a cyclone plowing a furrow of death through a populous city. Think of an earthquake, laying low a province. But here in the realm of the spirit is a force that seizes nations and permanently affects the civilization of the world. Paul invokes it and Rome turns Christian. Luther invokes it, and Europe is lighted up with reformation fires. Wesley invokes it, and England is saved from a reign of terror.

This force enters into human life and we have an Augustine, a John Bunyan, a George Whitefield, a

Dwight L. Moody, every one an apostle of the unseen.

But music is unreal to the deaf. Color is unreal to the blind. Faith is unreal to the prayerless. But to those who pray faith is a substantial verity. And the whole end and aim of Christianity is to lead us to live less in the realm of the visible and more in the realm of the invisible. Religion is the life of God in the soul of man. And this is wisdom, this is power, this is peace,—to see God as Jesus Christ reveals Him—at once the most extensive and the most personal fact in the universe.

II

THE CALL TO THE HEIGHTS

"It may be that the world can get along without God but *I* cannot. The universe-finity is to me like the chord of the dominant seventh, always leading towards, always inviting onwards, a chord of progress; God is the tonic triad, a chord of repose."

(*Poem Outlines.* Sidney Lanier. p. 69.)

"Life, for every one of us, however small our place, is a load too heavy to bear alone, too heavy, because for each of us it is weighted with death and eternity. It is made so that, by the compulsion of our weakness, we may be pressed into alliance with a power that is not our own."

(*Sidelights on Religion.* J. Brierly. p. 253.)

II

THE CALL TO THE HEIGHTS

"O thou that tellest good tidings to Zion, get thee up on a high mountain; O thou that tellest good tidings to Jerusalem, lift up thy voice with strength; lift it up, be not afraid; say unto the cities of Judah, Behold your God!" Isa. xl. 9. (R. V.)

The office of the Hebrew prophet was not merely to foretell, but to forth-tell, to tell forth to men the will of God. His voice was sometimes the voice of destiny, telling what was to be in the fullness of time. But it was oftener the voice of duty, telling what ought to be now.

Isaiah is first among Hebrew prophets in the splendor of his poetic speech, and in the loftiness of his spirit. Seven hundred years before the Star of Bethlehem showered its silver on the Judean night, he had caught the gleam of the day it heralded, and in his grasp of spiritual truth he is as one who has already seen the Christ. He saw from afar "the consolation of Israel" and his heart was glad. That is the secret of his buoyancy. He was not blind to the social and political corruption of the age. No man saw more clearly than he, and he kept not silence. But he saw more. He saw "the increasing purpose" of God, running through the ages, and the thoughts of men growing

wider and the world growing readier for the coming of its King. There is your true optimist. He is not, as one has said, "one who does not care what happens, so it does not happen to him." He is simply one who sees farther than his fellows. He hears sounds to which other ears are deaf, like the little Scotch girl, whose senses had grown keen in long illness, who, at the siege of Lucknow, heard the pipers miles away, as British troops marched to the rescue of the city.

It is wonderful how far you can see from a mountain. In the northern part of the Adirondacks there is a peak, from the summit of which, on a clear day, one can see not alone the neighboring Adirondacks, but the Green Mountains of Vermont and the White Mountains of New Hampshire. Yonder narrow strip of green is Lake Champlain. To the west is a silvery ribbon—that is the St. Lawrence, dotted with a thousand islands, while yonder,—north and east—are the spires of Montreal. On such a mountain stood the man of God who looked across to Canaan ere he closed the long heroic record of his life. To the watchman on such a mountain, a dweller in the valley called out, "What of the night?" and got the answer, "The morning cometh, and also the night." To the prophet, in the city or in the temple courts, God's spirit calls, in the text, saying, "Get thee up to a high mountain." This is "the call to the heights." And it is God's call to every human soul.

It is a call to clear vision. How easily the problems of the present blind us to the issues of the

future! When the Franco-Prussian war began, a messenger awakened Von Moltke at midnight with the news that the French army had taken the field with the cry, "On to Berlin." He said, "My orders are in the desk, in the pigeonhole at the right. Please see that they are issued." And he slept on until morning. His plans were already made. The war was ended before it began, and, practically, the Germans were in Paris long before Sedan, just because they were rich in men of vision. "Napoleon the Little" was also "Napoleon the Blind."

August 27, 1858, Lincoln and Douglas held their second joint debate at Freeport. At a conference of Republican leaders the night before, Lincoln announced his intention of forcing Douglas on the morrow to declare himself on the question whether a territorial legislature had or had not the power to exclude slavery. He was counseled not to do so, for it was foreseen that Douglas could make but one answer, and that his position would make him popular in Illinois, and win for him the senatorship. But Lincoln said, "I am after larger game. The battle of 1860 is worth a hundred of this." He foresaw that the very declaration which would win the senatorship for Douglas would lose him the presidency, and it did, for it hopelessly divided the Democratic party. It is not at all likely that Lincoln expected to be elected president in two years, but he expected that some Republican would be elected president on that issue. No man in modern times has possessed the prophetic spirit in

larger measure than he. Some one said of him during the war, "There was always a far-away look in his eyes." His soul was far away. He was a watchman on the mountain.

If we look for such a man beyond the sea, we find him in Gladstone, of whom Bunsen said, "He has heard higher tones than anyone else in the land." By which he meant that Gladstone's mind was habitually possessed by a higher consciousness than that of others.

The best thing about this life of ours is that it has the capacity for height. By one path or another, by poverty or by pain, by discipline of the mind or of the soul, by study of the works or the Word of God, by the passion for service or the power of prayer, or by all of these combined, we may rise until the earth seems but a little thing, and heaven not far away. Is not this the poet's meaning?

> "I hold it truth, with him who sings
> To one clear harp of divers tones,
> That men may rise on stepping-stones
> Of their dead selves to higher things."

The problem of life, then, above all else, is this: how to regulate our habits of thought and action, how to fulfill the duties and suffer the sorrows of time, so that by these we may attain at length "the firm resolve, the temperate will," the habit of seeing things from the highest possible view-point. It is a great thing to stand where you may see things from above. It is like standing on a summit, with the clouds below you, and the thunders

rolling at your feet. Below are unrest and terror, but above is calm. How different death would seem from the heavenly view-point! In what a new light sorrow would shine forth!

A man who had reached the heights of peace and power said: "I was born in poverty, and I had a withered arm from birth, but it never dawned upon me until I was fourteen that narrow circumstances and a bodily disability were just what I needed to make the most of my powers. It was when I said to my father, 'I am poor and lame,' and he said, quoting Scripture, 'The lame take the prey.' Then I saw that what I had always thought of as weights might turn out to be wings." When that awakening comes to us, we have begun to ascend. The office of religion is just this: to point to the high mountain and remind us that there is our home. History says, "Look back." Science says, "Look around." Philosophy says, "Look in." Religion says, "Look up. Get thee up on a high mountain."

A psalmist declares, "He maketh my feet like hinds' feet." Have you ever seen a stag, outlined against the sky, sure-footed on the far-off cliff? The mountain is its home. So, what the psalmist says is this, "By faith, I stand on high, serene and strong."

"Thou that tellest good tidings." This is the message of the prophet, and the prophet is the teacher of religion. This is the character of his message, it is good tidings. Is not this the very term the New Testament applies to the Gospel, "Evan-

gelion," good tidings? We get our words "evangel," "evangelist," "evangelical," from that word which means good news. At first the word meant a present given on account of good news. In Attic Greek, it meant a sacrifice offered on receipt of good news, but in the New Testament, it means the good news itself. Strange it is that the Gospel of good tidings has ever been interpreted so as to convey to men any other impression than that it is good tidings. The Master Himself made it clear that He came not to condemn the world, but to save it from condemnation; not to curse the world, but to remove the curse; not to limit life, but to enlarge it. Long ago it had become a proverb, "As cold waters to a thirsty soul, so is good news from a far country." That is what Christianity is. It is what the Son of Man came to tell us.

The two things that the world has most wished for in moments of fancy are the philosopher's stone, to turn base metal into gold, and the fountain of perpetual youth in which the time-worn pilgrim may wash away the scars of years. If such things were real, who would not make any pilgrimage, pay any price, to obtain the one and reach the other? Men have grown gray and some have even lost their reason trying to solve the problem of transmuting metals. The discoverer of Florida was an aged soldier who thought to find there the fabled waters. O, sons of earth, what if these dreams be but the shadows of things that are? What if in this Book there be the basis of a faith that does turn the common things of life into the

gold of the soul? And what if here we may learn the secret of eternal life? Then it is good tidings, indeed. Well, many have found it so. Close beside the bitter fountain in the wilderness grows the sweetening branch. The smitten rock, from which gushed forth the river, was but a symbol of Him who said at Jacob's well; "The water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life." Good news!

The deepest hunger, the keenest thirst we know, is for truth. Burdened with sin, we cry, "Is forgiveness possible?" When woe fills to overflowing the cup of life, when disaster follows disaster, and the plans we have made come crashing down about us, we say: "Is there a Father who knows and cares? Has He comfort and strength for us now?" Sitting in darkened chambers beside our dead, we ask: "Is there another life where the broken strands of this shall be re-knit?" If any man can answer these questions to our rational satisfaction, how glad and thankful we shall be! Then glad and thankful we should be, for One has answered them. He speaks as one who knows. He has the accent of authority and the tone of power. There is no halt in His gait or haze in His eyes as He calmly speaks of pardon, and inward reinforcement, and the Father's many mansions. He is not afraid, and His servants should not be.

"Lift up thy voice with strength. . . . Be not afraid."—Observe the positiveness of the message, and the consequent boldness of the messenger. But why should we be afraid? What have

we to fear? You say, "There is so much to fear; there is the paralyzing consciousness of the overmastering power of things present and visible; there is the tyranny of flesh and sense; there is the bold denial of materialism; there is the supercilious sneer of Epicureanism. There is the colossal conceit of rationalism; and, worst of all, there is the insidious strain of skepticism in us all which meets the affirmatives of faith with the thought, 'It is too good to be true.'" What are we to do? The text answers, "Lift up thy voice with strength. . . . Be not afraid." Say to them that are of a fearful heart, "Nothing is too good to be true if God be its Author." And God is the Author of the Gospel of His Son.

"Say unto the cities of Judah, Behold your God." Has the city then a special need of this message? Was there a city problem so long ago? Rome was not yet built; it was just beginning. There were a few shepherds' huts along the Tiber. Where the great cities of the modern world now stand was untraversed wilderness. But there was Jerusalem. And Tyre and Sidon and Damascus and Babylon were great. Then, as now, there were wealth and poverty, virtue and vice, the strong and the weak, the oppressor and the oppressed, side by side. Then, as now, the wicked flourished, and corruption promised large dividends; then, as now, the glutton feasted, and the beggar waited at his gate; then, as now, the successful man said to his soul, "Soul, . . . take thine ease;" then, as now, the lust of the eye, the

lust of the flesh, and the pride of life all too easily blotted out the vision of the Ideal; then, as now, organized society needed a Saviour, and so, to the cities of Judah, the prophet must cry "Behold your God!"

Can the thought of God cure the ills of the city, our city, where commerce dominates everything, and industry is personified by the man with a muck rake, or the man with a hoe? Can the thought of God save New York and London, Paris and Chicago, Peking and San Francisco? No; but the thought of God can uplift the minds of men, and clarify their vision until they see that only as the grace of God enters into human life, only as the presence of God becomes a restraining and constraining force, can there be any individual worth or social safety. The vision of Paul saved many a city of Asia Minor. The vision of Savonarola saved Florence. The vision of Luther saved Europe. The vision of Wesley saved England. And Christ was the center of that saving vision.

The city is to be saved only as the individuals of which it is composed are saved. Each of us can help to build the city in righteousness by practicing the Gospel of God incarnate. The history of our race began in the country—in Eden. But it is to end in the city—New Jerusalem. Midway between Eden and New Jerusalem is Babylon. We are in Babylon now. But every life hid with Christ in God, every soul devoted to the will of God, every "union of those who love in the service of those who suffer," is helping to transform earth's Babylon into God's New Jerusalem.

III

THE GREAT APPEAL

"I am moved more by my vision of the personality of Jesus than I am by my thought of His doctrines. Spiritual growth is brought about by the impact of nobler souls on ours. Consequently, I cannot understand the Voltaire-like petulance with which, in his Divinity School Address, Emerson banished 'the person of Jesus' from genuine religion. He thinks that you cannot be a man if you 'must subordinate your nature to Christ's nature.' It seems to me, however, that you realize your capacities only by coming into contact with their realization in others. The objectified self reveals the subjective aptitude; and with the thrill of discovery begins the higher development. Spiritual growth is the attainment of those who constantly look up to higher personalities. Now if it is true of Jesus Christ (as Emerson says in the address) that 'alone in all history He estimated the greatness of man: one man was true to what is in you and me,' then I should say that you and I are to find our own highest life by opening our souls to the influence of this perfect and absolute personality. Nay, as Jesus Christ was perfect man, so also, and for that very reason, was He the revelation and realization of the Divine Father. In the new dispensation of spirit, as in the old of dogma, He must therefore, in some sense, if not the orthodox sense, continue to be our Mediator and Saviour."

(*Agnosticism and Religion.* Jacob Gould Schurman. pp. 180, 181.)

III

THE GREAT APPEAL.

"Never man spake like this man." John vii. 46.

This was the testimony of all who heard Him,—priests, scribes, Pharisees, Sadducees, Romans, Greeks, Samaritans, Syro-Phœnicians. With one accord they all declared, "Never man spake like this man."

He spoke with a certainty that others lacked. The modern ministry that "ventures to assert" that if we do not repent, "so to speak," and be converted, "as it were," we shall be lost, "in a sense," did not learn its lesson from Him. His word was "Verily, verily."

He spoke with an authority that differenced Him from others. Others quoted the opinions of the ancients and the fathers. Others stood upon precedents and were full of classic instances. But Jesus was His own authority. He created precedents. He prefaced His great sayings with, "I say unto you." He spoke with a sanity, which though it was not always apparent to His contemporaries, is clearly seen by us to have been a feature of His doctrine which elevates Him far above every other teacher of His age and of subsequent ages. Moreover, He spoke with absolute fearless-

ness. Neither Jewish bigotry nor Roman power nor Greek scorn could silence His faithful lips or overcome His hero soul, or cause Him to dilute the truth for tender ears. Hebrew religiosity was shallow and hollow, and He knew and despised it. Roman power was a mere phantasm, and He so characterized it. Greek wisdom was short-sighted and He ignored it. The Roman procurator asked Him "What is truth?" And He answered, without apology, "I am the Truth."

Considered, too, as to the simplicity, the crystal clearness, the perfect transparency, of His teaching, "never man spake like this man." Words may be made to conceal or reveal thought. Rousseau once remarked that definition would be so much easier if it were not for the necessity of using words! The best literature suffers, necessarily, from translation into a foreign tongue, however flexible or copious that tongue may be. But turned into whatever mould of language, the truth Jesus taught is so plain that wayfaring men need not err therein.

In this respect English literature has few authors to remind us of Jesus' words. One such, however, is John Bunyan, whose mastery of terse, tense speech was due to his intimate knowledge of the Holy Scriptures. A Scotch preacher wrote a commentary on "Pilgrim's Progress" and a woman who read it told the author that she understood "Pilgrim's Progress" thoroughly, and hoped some time to be able to comprehend his notes!

Some writers are luminous; others are voluminous. The recorded words of Jesus are few, but they are like a gushing fountain in the heart of the hills. Rivers have their sources in its pure and unexhausted depths. So—as to certainty, authority, sanity, courage, and clearness, "never man spake like this man." This is why He appeals to humanity so powerfully. This is why He has taken deeper hold upon the race than any other, —taken hold with a grasp that time does not diminish.

Spite of the fact that Christianity has never numbered among its adherents more than a third of the world's population, the influence of Jesus on the intellectual and moral life of mankind has produced radical and even revolutionary changes in the thought and sympathies of nine-tenths of the really constructive races of the world.

There have been times when the power of Christianity seemed to be spent, when its future seemed uncertain, and its very existence in peril. In the fifteenth century and again in the eighteenth, the Star of Bethlehem shone but dimly through the mists of shifting systems and theories. But every such era of doubt has been succeeded by a renaissance of faith, and when men who had lost sight of the Star looked again they saw a light above the brightness of the sun.

Bishop Warren, in his little book, "The Miraculous Element in Christianity," points out that there have been six distinct assaults on Christianity:

The first was in the lifetime of Jesus by those who hated Him.

The heathen assault followed.

The third was pantheistic and was led by Spinoza.

The fourth was the skeptical philosophy of Hume.

The fifth was the rationalistic theory of Paulus and his followers.

The sixth is the historico-critical attack of Strauss and Wellhausen and that school.

The first five failed, or there would have been no necessity for a sixth. The sixth has already reached its power and begun to decline, and still is Christ exalted; still the world clings to Him, because, whatever of human interpretation has been revised, whatever that had been superimposed on Christianity has been removed, Jesus Christ remains with His eternal appeal to man. The great appeal, Jesus Christ's appeal to man, remains. I do not mean His entreaty, His invitation, His "Come unto Me" (O word of words the sweetest!), but that something in His person and character, that august and winsome something which evokes a wonderful response on the part of the unprejudiced normal man. I use the word "appeal" in the same sense in which we use it in speaking of a picture, a poem, a statue, an argument, a proposition, or a cause, when we say "It appeals" to us, or "It does not appeal" to us.

There are pictures that appeal to us. There is music that appeals to us. There are lines of argu-

ment that appeal to us, convince us, compel us to give assent to them. You know what it is in Hofendon's picture, "Breaking Home Ties," that appeals to us. It speaks to that almost universal experience in the memory of men who can never forget the day when the little bark of their lives glided out from the love-locked harbor of their childhood's home. You know what it is in Millet's "Angelus" that appeals to us. There is a concrete illustration of the world's three greatest thoughts, work, love, God. You know what it is in Raphael's Madonna that appeals to us. It speaks to us. It tells more eloquently than words could tell the dignity of motherhood, the sanctity of childhood, the mystery of the Incarnation.

There are poems that have the power of personal appeal. Longfellow's "Psalm of Life," Aldrich's "Ballad of Babie Bell," Burns's "Highland Mary" all have it. "The Ballad of Reading Gaol" may take its place with the great poems of appeal when we have forgotten who wrote it. There are musical compositions that exercise this spell over us. "The Pilgrims' Chorus," from "Tannhäuser" and Dvorak's "New World Symphony"—made half of melody and half of hope,—woo and win even the untrained ear.

Now what is it in the very thought of Christ that appeals to all who come face to face with Him? We do not all honor the appeal—rise to meet it—but even those who fail to respond to it recognize in Him the power that says "Come,"—says it so

mightily, so winsomely, that they have to quench their best impulses to resist it.

It is what He was, and what He eternally is. Even if we knew of no miracle He ever wrought; even if no direct word of His had floated to us across the troubled waters of twice a thousand years; if we had no other picture of Him than that the evangelists give us,—the picture of a soul more conscious of God than of Himself, more conscious of eternity than of time; so spiritual, yet so practical; so just, yet so compassionate; so leonine, yet so in love with peace; so solitary, yet so comradelike;—I say if we had only that portrait of Him, divested of all miracle and all parable, we would still be sensible of an infinite appeal.

The world is greatly in error in supposing that our faith in Jesus Christ rests upon what He did and said. It rests, rather, upon what He was, and is. We believe in His miracles because we believe in Him. But He is greater than any miracle He ever wrought, by so much as an artist is greater than his work, by so much as the whole is greater than a part. If you want miracles—miracles of ancient and modern times—miracles no one can doubt or deny,—study the appeal of Christ to men.

Imagine, if you can, a perfect man, a character in whom all the elements of strength are so blended as to produce no excess, leave no deficiency, and you have the man of all men to whom Jesus Christ would most powerfully appeal. If we were to meet such a man we would say "There is a perfect type of the Christian!" And in so saying

we pay tribute to Christ. We recognize in the perfect man the perfect image of Him.

The difficulty of defining what has been called the appeal of Christ is in itself a testimony to the extraordinary character of that appeal. An axiom is a self-evident truth. It is useless to prove that things that are equal to the same thing are equal to each other. It proves itself. It is folly to argue that a straight line is the shortest distance between two points. It argues itself.

Color is self-evidencing to the eye. (If it is not, the fault is not in the color, but in the eye. Consult the oculist not the chemist.) Music is self-evidencing to the ear. (If it is not, the ear needs treating.) Beauty is self-evidencing to the taste. The surgeon who spoke of a "beautiful surgical operation" had confused technical skill with beauty. The Pacific Ocean was self-evidencing to the mind of the first European navigator who beheld it. Balboa knew from the swell of the tides that this was no inland sea.

The Christian world has a definite conception of the person of Christ. It is not what one man thinks of Him, but a composite photograph of what all men see in Him—of what all men always have seen in Him. Each of us has in his mind's eye a figure of Christ to the making of which all Christians and all creeds have contributed. And when that conception of Christ occurs to any man—to any man not already prejudiced against Him—the effect is self-evidencing. By no process of logic, but by an act of intuitive moral judgment, we hail

Him as one like unto no other. Never man appealed to us as He appeals to us.

His appeal is to the whole man; it is self-evidencing; and it reveals its masterfulness by its silence. The great forces of the world are silent. Silent the sunshine that brings the world to beauty and bounty. Silent the light that repeats, in every sunset sky, the miracle of Cana of Galilee—water turned to wine. Silent the invisible weaver, life, sitting at its little loom we call the cell, weaving a manifold fabric of grass and tree and flower and flesh. Silent the planets that wheel their stately way around the sun. Silent the forces that lift oceans into the sky.

Seven hundred years before the advent of Jesus, a Hebrew prophet caught a glimpse of His coming, and of His ministry, and said, "He shall not strive, nor cry." When He came there was no such frenzy as sometimes attends the birth of a prince. He grew to manhood through thirty years of obscurity. He had no armies to attend Him, no retinue of servants and retainers. He was altogether unlike the great of earth.

Pierre Fritel has painted "The Conquerors." There are Xerxes, and Alexander, and Cæsar, and Genghis Khan, and Attila, and Napoleon, on war-horses, under banners, trumpets sounding, drums beating, cymbals clashing. So the earthly great have come. Not so the great of heaven. "The Kingdom of God cometh not with observation." Jesus Christ is King and Conqueror in a realm where only the "still small voice" is heard. The

light of the new life comes like dawn on the mountains.

> "Will the East unveil? The East is unveiled!
> Have a care, sweet heaven, 'tis dawn!"

The life of God in the soul of the believer comes like the springtime. Springtime beats no gong, issues no prospectus, but one day there is a riot of green in the trees, and a patch of purple on south-lying hillsides where a week ago was snow. A robin sounds a cheery note from the hedge and spring is at the portal of the year!

It is wonderful, when we yield to the appeal of Christ, to feel, as time goes by, new impulses growing in us; new pity for all pain; new longing after truth; new devotion to duty; new confidence in prayer; new assurance of immortality. God is working in us, and "now is our salvation nearer than when we believed."

IV

MAN'S RESPONSE TO CHRIST'S APPEAL

"So much for the individual. But positive evidence does not end here. Look at the effects of Christian belief as exercised on human society—1st, by individual Christians on the family, etc.; and, 2d, by the Christian Church on the world.

"All this may lead on to an argument from the adaptation of Christianity to human higher needs. All men must feel these needs more or less in proportion as their higher natures, moral and spiritual, are developed. Now Christianity is the only religion which is adapted to meet them, and, according to those who are alone able to testify, does so most abundantly. All these men, of every sect, nationality, etc., agree in their account of their subjective experience; so as to this there can be no question. The only question is as to whether they are all deceived."

(*Thoughts on Religion.* George John Romanes. pp. 162, 163.)

"And now from all this we may come to a definition. If one were asked to state in terms what a Christian is, I should say something like this: a Christian is one who is responding to whatever meanings of Christ are, through God's Spirit, being brought home to his intellectual or moral conscience. This is a definition at once exhaustive of the profoundest Christianity and admissive of the simplest. The meanings of Christ, either for thought or life, that one man may be able to respond to with intellectual assent or practical obedience, will be many and advanced; another man may, with equal earnestness and effort, be able, from his constitution, upbringing or circumstances, to respond to but the most elementary. Yet both are Christians if both are responding with a faithful conscience."

(*The Fact of Christ.* P. Carnegie Simpson, M.A. pp. 195, 196.)

IV

MAN'S RESPONSE TO CHRIST'S APPEAL

"To whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life." John vi. 68.

Mr. P. Carnegie Simpson has given us a brilliant and remarkable little book, called "The Fact of Christ." His argument is lucid and his statement felicitous. He makes plain that whatever may be our theories to account for the phenomena of Christianity, and however we may differ in our statement of principles involved, there is, underlying them all, the indubitable fact that Jesus Christ made an impression upon the world, and introduced a force into the world, to account for which demands both intellectual and moral candor.

No student of history doubts for a moment that Jesus Christ appeals to man as does no other character in human history. His appeal is not alone to the whole man, that is, to the entire range of his faculties, but, in a remarkable way, He appeals to the whole of humanity. Mohammed appeals to the Arab, the Turk, the fierce and fatalistic nomad of the East. Buddha appeals to the reflective mind of the Orient. Jesus Christ's appeal is uniquely cosmopolitan. He holds the scepter of the Western world, and yet a learned Hindoo has said, "None

but Jesus deserves, and none but He shall have the diadem of India."

It is a fundamental principle of pedagogy, "No impression without corresponding expression." Let us inquire what impression the fact of Christ has made on the mind of man, and if we can, let us give expression to it.

Let us translate ourselves, so far as we are able, to the first century of the era, to Jerusalem after Pentecost, or to Ephesus, while John is still living and teaching, or to Rome, when Paul is living in his own hired house, preaching the Gospel to little groups of freemen and slaves, who come to him for instruction. What is our first thought as we observe what is going on? One Name is on the lips of all the members of this little sect. They whisper it in prayers and chant it in songs. They greet each other and part, in that Name. They break bread together and talk of Him. They bury their dead in His Name and carve His Name upon their tombs. The slave is no longer servile, and the master no longer pitiless. The humble are bold, and the strong are tender. Persecutions come, and the persecuted suffer the ruin of their fortunes and the peril of their lives with serenity and courage. All of which is not natural. It is natural for the slave to hang his head, and for the master to scorn his human chattels. It is natural for the lowly to abase themselves, and for the strong to lord it over the humble. It is natural for a man to cling to his possessions, and hold life above all else. Selfishness is the oldest

custom of the race. Sin is the deadly drift of the ages. But, somehow, the custom is broken, the drift arrested. By what? By whom? By the mere influence—we will call it that for lack of a better name—of a crucified peasant! Was He a scholar? No. Did He write any books? Not one. Was He a poet? No. Did He sing any songs and so "call cowards up to duty in commanding rhyme"? Never. Then He must have been a soldier, a warrior, a great captain? Not that. A political leader, inaugurating a new social order? Nor that. What then?

I need not answer that question. That it is asked proves what is the first impression Jesus Christ has made on us and on the world. Wonder, stupendous and unending wonder, is our first impression. Immeasurable surprise is the first response in man to Christ's appeal.

We ask, What did Jesus propose to do? We see what He is doing among men, but the question is, What did He purpose to do? Some men go all through life without a purpose. But most of us form a purpose before we have passed far into the years of youth. With one, it is to make a fortune, with another to win fame, with others, to carve, or paint, or write, or fight, or build, or heal, or plough. Now what did Jesus conceive His life's task to be? Our wonder increases when we learn that He seriously proposed to found a kingdom, to destroy the works of evil, to institute the reign of love among men and among nations, to redeem society by bringing back to goodness and to God

all the individuals of which society is composed. Did any other ever undertake a task like that? Compared with it, the emancipation of a race of slaves, or even the founding of a new nation, is a small thing.

Go a little further into His life and you will find He proposed and professed to solve the three greatest and gravest problems of life—the problems of sin, and sorrow, and death. Now look at His philosophy, His theology, His metaphysics, His ethics, His system, whatever it may be called, His Gospel, let us say, and you will see, potentially if not actually, the materials out of which all this is to be done. There is love, pure and sacrificial, upon which to found a kingdom in the hearts of men, love as the basis of a new brotherhood; there is grace abounding much more than ever sin abounded; inward strength and comfort for the heart with sorrow laden; and there is immortality with which to face the fearful phantasm of death. All these elements are in His Gospel, and they must impress us with their absolute adequacy. The causes are fully equal to the effects desired. The plaster is larger than the wound.

Surprise, at first, and afterwards, a sense of adequacy, are awakened by a study of the fact of Christ. Then follows in our minds the tribute we instinctively pay to greatness, to simplicity, and power. A good part of the admiration we have for Abraham Lincoln is based upon our perception of his native nobility, his elemental simplicity. He was so free from anything like artificial greatness,

from the counterfeit semblance of dignity, and yet so masterful, so completely captain of his soul, and of the Ship of State he guided through the seething sea of war. It is easy to admire a man of our own flesh and blood, so near us that there are those still living who have touched his hand. It is not so easy to admire a personality separated from us by sixty generations. Yet admiration is a feeble word to measure the response in our hearts when we hear the name of Mary's Son. He seems not so far away, after all. We read the Gospels and arise with a kind of feeling that if we have not seen Him, we have at least heard His footfall on the temple's marble pavement, or the street, that we have caught some accent of His voice, or touched the hem of His passing garments. Whittier puts it so:

> But warm, sweet, tender, even yet
> A present help is He;
> And faith has still its Olivet,
> And love its Galilee.
>
> The healing of His seamless dress
> Is by our beds of pain;
> We touch Him in life's throng and press,
> And we are whole again.

No phenomenon within all the range of consciousness is more inexplicable, and at the same time more indubitable, than the nearness of Jesus to His disciples, in all ages. We speak of the friendship of Jesus, fellowship with Him, comradeship. There is no name which quite satisfac-

torily describes the experience. Poetry gives us its best expression.

"'He is my friend,' I said,—
'Be patient!' Overhead
The skies were drear and dim,
And lo! the thought of Him
Smiled on my heart,—and then
The sun shone out again.

"'He is my friend!' The words
Brought summer and the birds;
And all my winter time
Thawed into running rhyme,
And rippled into song,
Warm, tender, brave, and strong."

When Elisha had succeeded Elijah, and with the prophetic mantle on his shoulders, went his way, the sons of the prophets saw him, and the story reads that they saw that the spirit of Elijah rested on him, and "they came to meet him, and bowed themselves to the ground before him." That was their tribute to his greatness. His greatness appealed to them and the loyal manhood in them recognized the masterly manhood in him. What shall we call that sentiment which is awakened in us by our recognition of the royalty, the majesty, the divinity, and with it all, the brotherly advocacy, the loverlike ministry of Jesus Christ? Admiration is not the word. Reverence? Adoration? Gratitude? Worship? Call it what we will, it is the spirit of the disciple who said, "To whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life."

There is still another response in man to Christ's

appeal. It is suggested by a line in Longfellow's story of "The Sifting of Peter":

> "One sight of that pale, suffering face,
> Will make us feel the deep disgrace
> Of weakness.

A mere apprentice cannot set his crude canvas beside the picture of a master without a sense of shame. The contrast is too evident. When we think of what Christ was,—pure, and there is no white day in all our lives; peaceable, and there is something in us that delights in strife; unselfish, and our thoughts center in "I" and "me" and "mine"; when we think of how dead He was to all low aims, and how alive He was to all high thoughts and affections; how can we help abhorring ourselves? When we measure ourselves by comparison with Him, unless our moral faculties are utterly obtuse, we see the moral distance that separates us from Him.

As a rule, the holier a heart grows, the more deeply conscious it becomes of its own defilement. In this respect Jesus is an anomaly. He never confessed a sin because He never committed one. Fine example of humility as Jesus' life affords us, there is never a consciousness of need to be forgiven. On the tomb of Copernicus, are written these words: "Not that grace which Paul received crave I; not that favor with which Thou didst pardon Peter; but that which Thou didst grant the malefactor, that alone crave I." There is the heart of the true believer. The sight of Christ

has brought its sense of shame. But the shame of the penitent never sinks to despair. It rises to hope, and it dares to pray with the dying thief, "Remember me."

So, this is the manifold response in man to Christ's manifold appeal: surprise, apprehension of adequacy, recognition of His eternal Saviourhood, self-consciousness of need, and faith that God is able to supply our need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus.

V

A DOUBTER'S PRAYER

"Constrained at the darkest hour to humbly confess that without God's help I was helpless, I vowed a vow in the forest solitude that I would confess His aid before men. A silence as of death was round about me; it was midnight; I was weakened by illness, prostrated with fatigue, and worn with anxiety for my white and black companions, whose fate was a mystery.

"In this physical and mental distress I besought God to give me back my people. Nine hours later we were exulting with rapturous joy. In full view of all was the crimson flag with the crescent, and beneath its waving folds was the long-lost rear column.

"As I mentally review the many grim episodes, and reflect on the marvelously narrow escapes from utter destruction to which we have been subjected during our various journeys to and fro through the immense and gloomy extent of primeval wood, I feel utterly unable to attribute our salvation to any other cause than to a gracious Providence who, for some purposes of His own, preserved us.

"Before turning in for the night I resumed my reading of the Bible as usual. I had already read the book through from beginning to end, once, and was now at Deuteronomy for the second reading, and I came unto the verse where Moses exhorts Joshua in these fine lines: 'Be strong and of a good courage, fear not, nor be afraid of them: for the Lord thy God, He it is that doth go with thee; He will not fail thee, nor forsake thee.'"

(*In Darkest Africa.* H. M. Stanley. Vol. 1, pp. 2, 4, 311.)

V

A DOUBTER'S PRAYER

"And straightway the father of the child cried out, and said with tears, Lord, I believe; help Thou mine unbelief." Mark ix. 24.

We are all believers—at times. We are all doubters—at times. There are moments of belief and moments of unbelief in every life. The most thoroughly confirmed skeptic has his hours of faith, and the most confident believer has his hours of doubt. Life is a curious combination of opposites. The hero of battles is afraid to speak a word from a public platform; the frail woman rises to heights of reckless daring; the prudent business man, counsellor of nations, becomes the dupe of a cheap swindler; the professional vagabond, the drifter, the purposeless and passive apostle of leisure, leaps, in one glorious, all-atoning moment of self-abandon, to the death of one than whom "greater love hath no man,"—only the tramp lays down his life for a stranger!

A newly arrived visitor on our planet, a native of Mars, reading certain pages of human history, would be much confused, and possibly diverted, by the apparent inconsistencies of certain pages of earthly history: Benvenuto Cellini writes with-

out hesitation of his pious thoughts and fervent prayers at the very moment he is meditating the assassination of his enemy; John Newton, master of a slave ship, rejoices in the possession of a peculiar spiritual peace; the Puritan comes to America to escape religious persecution, and turns persecutor when he gets into the saddle! These are instances from comparatively modern history, and it has been the same from the beginning. Abraham could lie and pray; Elijah could withstand the king to his face, and flee from the wrath of the queen; Peter could betray his Lord, and die for Him. What does it all mean? That we are all, as Peter Cartwright confessed to his bishop, "sanctified in spots"? That we fall within the class represented by the person whose obituary in a country newspaper contained the curious comment, "He had been a Christian, off and on, for fifty years"?

Are moral distinctions, after all, not clearly defined? Is the line an invisible one—or a variable one—which separates the true from the false, the good from the evil? It is neither, but human nature is variable, and God has not yet finished making man. No good man is wholly good, and no bad man is wholly bad. Character is not a matter of isolated circumstances and events, but of the general tendency of one's life. No one of us is what he seems to be at any particular time, but he is what he is with reference to what he was, and to what he aspires to be. The evil that exists in good lives is there to impel us to fight

the good fight till life's last sun is set, and the good that is in evil lives is there to bind us still to God, and give us glimpses of possible redemption. The poet puts it simply when he says:

> "I think, with a grief half glad,
> That the bad are as good as the good are bad."

The casual hearer, the superficial reader, of the poet's lines may say, "Does not the poet mean to affirm that goodness and badness exist in us all in about the same measure and proportion?" No, he does not say that the good are as bad as the bad, nor does he say that the bad are as good as the good; he says that there is a little goodness in the bad, and that there is a little badness in the good. In the case of the good, the evil is exceptional; in the case of the bad the virtue is exceptional.

What constitutes the difference between the believer and the unbeliever, since they both doubt and both believe? Are they not therefore in the same spiritual order? Think not so. The great fact, the determining fact, in the life of the believer is his belief; in the life of the unbeliever it is his doubt. The believer clings to his faith, and suspects his doubt. The unbeliever clings to his doubts and suspects his faith. Or, to use a more familiar comparison, the believer believes his belief, and doubts his doubt, while the unbeliever believes his doubt, and doubts his belief.

The poor man of the text, the man with a sick child (and how we pity him, and pity the child!)—

is he a believer or an unbeliever? Which does he put first, his faith or his unfaith? "Lord, I believe." That is the first thing in his mind. That counts most. The other thought is secondary. So, he is a believer, but he is a doubting believer. His prayer is the prayer of a doubter, but he is a believing doubter. There is a world of difference between honest doubt and stupid or stubborn unbelief. Jesus dealt differently with the two, and so should we. "Him that is weak in the faith, receive ye, but not to doubtful disputation." And again, "Tarry one for another." Some are able to make more rapid progress in truth than others; let not such despise those who find it hard to take their first few steps in faith.

You know how it is in school. There are always some bright, precocious scholars who leave the others far behind. You know the contempt with which the prize scholar sometimes looks upon the "trailer." You know the impatience of the teacher sometimes when a whole class is held back by one student who cannot get over a hard place or see through an intricate problem. I do not know that the best pedagogy would say to the teacher, "Tarry for the slow scholar," but many a slow scholar has caught up with his class because some teacher, at vacation time, or after hours, or because some classmate, or fraternity friend, tarried for him. You know what soldiers do on a long march. They tarry for the weak and the lame, except in the emergency of approaching battle. The strong and vigorous will bear the arms of

the weak, and if one sinks down by the roadside, there is an ambulance for him, and in the absence of an ambulance, officers have been known to dismount, and repeat the beautiful self-denial of the Samaritan who put a wounded man on his own beast and brought him to the inn.

Look at the Master's treatment of this doubter. The man confesses his faith is faltering. Something is in the way of his belief. I have wondered if it may not have been that barrier to faith which all of us have stumbled over at times when approaching some great promise of God, that common reflection, "It is too good to be true." Whatever it was, it was no barrier to the love and power of Jesus, for, without delay, he granted the father's request, and spoke the word that released and relieved the afflicted child.

Do we not see in this incident much that is of permanent value to the believer, even the doubting believer, in our own age? Faltering faith surely honors itself by frank confession. Doubts do sometimes loom large in the dark, but assume far less alarming proportions when brought to the light. A great-minded and tender-hearted bishop, whose name is cherished by us all, said to a mother who was much distressed by the disposition of her son, a college student, to talk skeptically, "Let him ventilate his notions. Let him air his views. He is trying to find out what he believes, and he will not find out until he exposes his ideas to the full light of day." Another, equally wise, said in a similar instance; "It is a plain case of

intellectual measles. This kind of skepticism is the rash. It is best to let it come out. Don't drive it in."

Faltering faith is better confessed than concealed. But mark the wisdom of this doubter,—he goes straight to the Master with his confession. How many knots would be untangled, how many vexed and vexing problems would be solved by going to the very central source of authority! For, meager as is the outline of our Saviour's teachings in the Gospels, there is that in them which effectively lifts much of the world's burden of doubt. The rest He promises to the laboring and heavy-laden is rest from perturbing thoughts, rest from tormenting uncertainties, rest from harassing doubts, as well as rest from weariness, and weakness, and wickedness. Faltering faith, in the case of this doubter, not only honors itself by candid confession, but points out the way of peace by the very nature of its expression. The confession is a prayer.

The doubter who makes the confession of his doubts an advertisement, a mere cheap appeal to publicity, alienates himself, by that very act, from the spirit of the truth-seeker. It is as indelicate to expose one's doubts in the market place as to display one's sorrows to the gaze of passers-by. Here is the golden rule for all such souls as this father, this half-believer: Tell your doubts to God; publish your faith to your fellow-man. There is no place where doubt so quickly vanishes, where weak faith so certainly grows strong, where lame

faith leaps, and blind faith sees, as at the Master's feet, the throne of Grace. There is wisdom in the prayer, "Help thou mine unbelief."

I am not saying there are no others to help our unbelief. There are books and teachers and pastors and friends that help our unbelief. A Cambridge professor once declared that no student of his ever left the university without being permanently influenced by the study of Butler's "Analogy." Walker's "Philosophy of the Plan of Salvation" has been useful in dissipating doubt and stimulating faith in many a student's life. When Phillips Brooks died, a great company of men rose up to call him blessed, to testify that when, in crises of their lives, they went to him, they found light and leading. If anywhere within your reach there be a man of firm faith, a man like Tennyson's friend who "fought his doubts and gathered strength," one who has faced the specters of the mind and laid them, one whose faith is refreshing and contagious, and who knows how to prove that "the soul has reasons that Reason cannot know," go to that friend, that teacher, and say, "Help thou mine unbelief." Not to the doubter to compare your doubts, or to confirm them, lest you be like a sick man who seeks advice of fellow-patients in a hospital, but to the believer who has a well-reasoned creed and the capacity to vindicate it, to him go with the request, "Help thou mine unbelief." But the skill of all such men in helping our unbelief is feeble compared with His to Whom, at this or any moment we may appeal with

the absolute certainty that He will speak the one word to us we most need to hear.

He will speak the word of patience to the soul whose doubt is but a passing phase of thought. He will speak the word of grace to the soul whose doubt is tangled in some mesh of trying circumstance. He will speak the word of peace to the soul whose doubt is but an echo of the world's periodic religious upheaval, or a reflection of his own weariness. He will speak the word of trust to the soul whose doubt arises from an over-anxiety to peer into the mechanism of the moral universe. So shall His power be with us in the night, and whatsoever doubt vexes our understanding, our hearts shall answer it with the assurance, "I know Whom I have believed."

VI

THE INTELLECTUAL INFLUENCE OF JESUS

"But wherever there is a romantic movement in art there somehow, and under some form, is Christ, or the soul of Christ. He is in *Romeo and Juliet*, in the *Winter's Tale*, in Provençal poetry, in the *Ancient Mariner*, in *La Belle Dame sans Merci*, and in Chatterton's *Ballad of Charity*.

"We owe to Him the most diverse things and people. Hugo's *Les Miserables*, Baudelaire's *Fleurs du Mal*, the note of pity in Russian novels, Verlaine and Verlaine's poems, the stained glass and tapestries and the quattrocento work of Burne-Jones and Morris, belong to him no less than the tower of Giotto, Lancelot and Guinevere, Tannhäuser, the troubled romantic marbles of Michelangelo, pointed architecture, and the love of children and flowers,—for both of which, indeed, in classical art there was but little place, hardly enough for them to grow or play in, but which, from the twelfth century down to our own day, have been continually making their appearances in art, under various modes and at various times, coming fitfully and wilfully, as children, as flowers, are apt to do: spring always seeming to one as if the flowers had been in hiding, and only came out into the sun because they were afraid that grown-up people would grow tired of looking for them and give up the search; and the life of a child being no more than an April day on which there is both rain and sun for the narcissus.

"Christianity is much else, I know, but, to the intellect Christianity is the reasserting and reëstablishing of faith as the organ of knowledge and as the method of life. What was the fall of man, but the unreasoning triumph of reason in the soul of man? The serpent which tempted to sin was rationalism, charming but stinging. Man persisted in eating of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. He would not wait in trust upon God's knowledge. He must know for himself. The heart was all loveless and the will was powerless; but the reason had won a triumph; the intellect had its false supremacy."

(*De Profundis.* Oscar Wilde. pp. 72, 73, 74.)

VI

THE INTELLECTUAL INFLUENCE OF JESUS

"The mind . . . which was in Christ Jesus." Phil. ii. 5.

The Christian world well knows the extent and vitality of the moral and spiritual influence of Jesus,—how by His words and life He has lifted the world into a purer moral and loftier spiritual atmosphere than it had ever known before. The world was not without its moral teachers before Jesus, but it remained for Him to vitalize the dead morality of paganism at its best, to put into righteousness not only emotion, as Matthew Arnold states it, but principle as well. The world had also its spiritual leaders before Jesus. The Hebrew prophets were spiritual geniuses. Jesus fulfilled what they had dreamed, and completed what they began. Buddha lived in the realm of the spiritual, but Jesus taught the world the true relation between the spiritual and the material, the ideal and the actual.

If Jesus had done no more than this, if He had left His impress upon the moral and spiritual life of the world, He would still be the world's greatest Leader, and humanity's truest Benefactor. But His intellectual influence has been as vital and as extensive as His moral and spiritual influence,

and of that we do not hear so much. Of the influence of Jesus on the mental life of mankind I would have you think. "The mind . . . which was in Christ Jesus" means much more than His intellect; it means His whole disposition, His emotional and volitional nature, His mental attitude, and moral altitude; but it includes His intellectual habit, as well, and so, let us use it.

Employing the term, "the mind of Christ" in this restricted sense, what were His intellectual habits? What were His modes of thinking? What characterized His processes of reasoning and judging? Three things supremely. He saw the world as one. He recognized the inestimable value of truth. He perceived the essential unity of mental and moral truth. And for one Man, in that age, to stand upon a platform of that kind; for one Man to be loyal to such ideas, was to stand out from all others, and above all others, like Saul of Israel "from his shoulders and upward."

It is not easy to estimate the influence on man's mental life of that one idea, the world as one, the unity of world-processes. Zoroaster, who still numbers his adherents by millions, taught a dualism; there is an empire of light and an empire of darkness. Paganism taught a pluralism; there are many empires of authority and power: one god of the sea, another of the air, another of the earth, and another of the winds; one god of love (that is, animal love) and another of war, and another of the harvest, and another of the chase. Here and there were men like Plato, who saw the unreason and the

mischief of such a conception of world-processes, but none saw it so clearly, or proclaimed it so indubitably as Jesus, so that from the beginning of His Gospel until now, His conception of the unity of God and the harmony of cosmic forces has cleared the mental atmosphere, and made possible sane thinking with reference to first causes and natural phenomena and the universal reign of law.

Aristotle is sometimes spoken of as the father of the scientific method of observing facts and drawing conclusions; but he was a pupil of Plato, and Plato came nearest to Jesus in his idea of the world's unity. Francis Bacon, more than any other modern man, gave us the modern scientific method, perfecting that which Aristotle began. But Francis Bacon looked to Jesus as his Master, and was not forgetful of his debt, and of the world's debt, to that Galilean Teacher who swept all the pagan gods and notions of intermediary deities off the field of man's mental vision.

The work of Jesus in this respect, was like the work of a man who plants the powder blast in a quarry. Others build out of material which he dislodges. It was like the work of the pioneers, who cleared the forests for generations that later built palaces. He was a great Pathfinder for multitudes of thinkers, not all of whom are well aware of their intellectual indebtedness to Him.

It is more easily demonstrable that Jesus' emphasis on the superlative value of truth has had unmeasured influence on the intellect of the world.

No other teacher has ever made so much of truth. Some have made more of facts. Jesus never dogmatized about facts, just because He knew how much more important truth is than mere facts. The historian is anxious to collect and classify facts. The philosopher cares little for facts save as they point to truth. Truths explain facts. A thousand people may be trusted to collect facts to one who may be trusted to recognize truth when he sees it.

Jesus said, "I am the Truth." Here is an affirmation of the revelatory power of personality, which the psychologists of the world are just beginning to recognize. Moreover, it is an affirmation of a principle that theologians have not always appreciated, that Christianity is, in its beginning, as in its finality, attachment to a Person.

Jesus said, "Ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." It was as if Jesus foresaw the age-long struggle of the world for freedom. Now all freedom is from one root,—political freedom, social freedom, religious freedom, industrial freedom, it is all the fruit of one plant, and that plant has its root in the freedom of the spirit. Herein Jesus proved Himself the world's farthest-sighted Reformer. He knew what revolutions, what new adjustments, what new creations would follow the freedom of the spirit. So He uttered a single sentence, a simple pronouncement that all freedom has its source in the inner life of man, and lo! all things begin to be made new. It is not strange that President Eliot of Harvard selected these words to be inscribed upon the walls of the

Congressional Library at Washington. They are the magna charta of the human mind. Where else is such encouragement to the spirit of research and discovery? Where else is such a commission to read all the leaves of God's Book, His Book above us, in the starry sky, His Book beneath us, in the rock-ribbed earth, His Book within us, and His Book before us, the Holy Scriptures of our faith? Pastor Robinson told the Pilgrims, "New truths are yet to burst upon us from this Book." Noble words, but they are only an echo,—the voice comes to us out of Galilee.

Hospitality to all truth, vast tolerance of the mind, the catholic spirit of the man who said, "I am willing to sit at the feet of anyone, however humble he may be, if only he will teach me truth," —all this is in the train of Jesus' high appraisal of truth.

But these two mental traits of Jesus, His conception of the world as one, and His knowledge of the supreme worth of truth, are less exclusively His, are more characteristic of some other great teachers, such as Plato, than is the third. I refer to His perception of the essential unity of mental and moral truth.

The vice of ancient philosophy, and of much modern thinking, is that it suffers a divorce of mental and moral sincerity. An Apostle speaks of those who are "ever learning and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth." Such people are like a hunter who kills game, and lets it lie where it falls. He is out for the fun of shooting.

The noblest game on our western plains was exterminated by that method. Or, to use another figure, there is a method of seeking truth not unlike that of the coquette who captures hearts merely for the sensation of conquest. The search for truth is worth nothing if, when we arrive at truth, we are unwilling to adopt it, even though it be of the character of a moral imperative. As well kill game for the mere sake of killing; as well win hearts for the mere sake of the sense of victory; as well cook a meal and leave it uneaten; as well discover a mine and never work it; as well paint a picture and turn it to the wall; or build a mansion and board it up, as to seek the truth and then turn from it when we find it demands the heroism of surrender, the humiliation of confession, or the sacrifice of service.

Multitudes have studied the personality of Jesus Christ, and even when they have been satisfied that He is the Saviour of souls, have been unwilling to pay the price of discipleship. They lack moral sincerity. And other multitudes have failed to see in Jesus Christ all that He really is, simply because they approached the study of His character without that quality of moral candor, suggested by His own words, "If any man will do . . . shall know." No man can see in Jesus Christ all that He is who does not bring to that study the willingness to do His will, if it be clear that His will is coincident with the will of God.

There is an impressive passage in one of Sidney Lanier's lectures to the students at Johns Hopkins

University, in which he says; "He who has not yet perceived how moral and artistic beauty are convergent lines which run back into a common ideal origin, he who has not come to that stage in which the beauty of holiness and the holiness of beauty burn as one fire, shine as one light within him, he is not yet the great artist." Was it not Aristotle who taught the doctrine that the perception of truth is essentially a moral act? Certain it is that this is implied in Jesus' words, "If any man will do His will, he shall know of the doctrine." Frederick W. Robertson gives us a significant phrase, "Obedience, the condition of knowledge." Noah Porter, once President of Yale, uses a similar expression in one of his baccalaureate sermons. This is what I mean when I speak of the unity of mental and moral truth.

I have a friend who sat down one day and counted the words of Jesus recorded in the four Gospels. He was amazed to find how few they are. They could all be printed on one page of a modern newspaper. Yet those words are the classics of the religious world. What volumes of literature, what galleries of art, what wealth of speech, what folios of song, have flowed out from that little "lake of dreams"! More than all that, what heroic endeavors to find the truth, to learn the truth by living it, to mould the truth into the body of life, to weave it into the fabric of character His words have inspired!

Hugh McMillan says that the two most significant moments in the history of modern learning

were, one, when Galileo first saw the greatness of the universe, the other, when Buffon, examining a pile of fossil bones, perceived that they were of animals hitherto unknown, and at once concluded that the natural history of the world must be lengthened by many ages. Those two moments marked immeasurable growth for the human mind. There have been many such moments,—moments of discovery, which have enlarged the boundaries of human knowledge. Men who make such discoveries, arrive at such conclusions, are stars in the sky of learning. But there is a Sun in that sky. He Who first saw the world as one, Who first taught that truth is to be valued above all things else, and Who made plain that the only way to possess truth is to translate it into character,—shall we not call Him "the sovereign Seer of time"? "The mind . . . which was in Christ Jesus" was creative in the highest sense, and His mind in us lifts us to higher levels of thinking, as well as of living and loving.

VII

THE INSPIRATION OF THE PROPHET

"Slowly but inevitably we are moving to this great thought. It is summed up in one word: Redemption. The watchword of a century ago was gravitation. It explained the poise of the universe by a great and hitherto undiscovered law. The watchword of yesterday was evolution. It explains progressive change: the mounting-up of life 'through spires of form.' The forms of the universe are seen in a series which is in the main ascendant, and in which the survivor is supreme. The watchword of to-morrow is Redemption. The thinker will some day live, who will make that great word Redemption stand out in all its vast mystery and significance. This, I take it, is the work of our new century.

"Redemption is the explanation of the existence of man, of his present progress, and his future destiny. It is the great mystery of joy in which the race partakes; the spiritual culmination of all things earthly; the forecast of eternal things yet to be.

"Redemption is not a dogma; it is a life. Redemption is a perpetual and ascendant moral growth. It marks a world-balm, a world-change. It is in the spirit of man that it works, and not in his outer condition, or external strivings. It is ultimately to root sin out of the world.

"Through stormy sorrows and perpetual desolations comes the race to God. Zion is the whole of things—the encompassment of space, and time, and endless years,—an environment of immortality and peace."

(*The Warriors.* Anna Robertson Brown Lindsay. pp. 163,164.)

VII

THE INSPIRATION OF THE PROPHET

"In the year that king Uzziah died I saw also the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up, and his train filled the temple.

"Above it stood the seraphim: each one had six wings; with twain he covered his face, and with twain he covered his feet, and with twain he did fly.

"And one cried unto another, and said, Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord of hosts: the earth is full of his glory.

"And the posts of the door moved at the voice of him that cried, and the house was filled with smoke.

"Then said I, Woe is me! for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips: for mine eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts.

"Then flew one of the seraphim unto me, having a live coal in his hand, which he had taken with the tongs from off the altar:

"And he laid it upon my mouth, and said, Lo, this hath touched thy lips; and thine iniquity is taken away, and thy sin purged.

"Also I heard the voice of the Lord, saying, Whom shall I send, and who will go for us? Then said I, Here am I; send me." Isa. vi. 1-8.

There were reformers before the Reformation. Such were Wycliffe, and Huss, and Savonarola.

There were Christians before Christ. Abraham, Moses, David, and Isaiah must be numbered among them. They looked forward toward Christ, in hope, even as we look backward to Him, in faith.

Of all the Christians before Christ, Isaiah seems to have the most Christlike vision of the world as the subject of redemption. He has much of the spirituality of John, and much of the mental vigor of Paul. He saw the New Jerusalem in the midst of the old. He heard heavenly harmonies above earthly discords. He sought to make a new earth wherein dwelt righteousness.

The verses I have read tell us whence Isaiah derived his inspiration. He saw God. No man can be a prophet until he has that vision. We are not prepared to see man, or sin, or duty, or death, or destiny, until first we have seen God. What I mean is this: a clear apprehension of God is necessary to the understanding of any problem involving moral law. A right view of God is as the base line to the builder, the ground tone to the artist, the keynote to the musician.

Isaiah's hour of inspiration was the hour of his vision of God. The supreme hour of any life, the very pearl of hours, is when God is thought of as He is. It may be we have imagined Him as a great King, seated on His throne of power, hurling thunderbolts at His foes; or we have pictured Him a stern Judge, with an instrument of vengeance in His hands, ready to strike through "with prongs of pain" the luckless sinner that stands before Him; or, we have thought of Him as an impersonal Power, an impenetrable Mystery, a Stream of Tendency, or an Infinite Unknown. Well, when one who has held such a view of God sees Him as He is,—the God who is better

than our best thoughts of Him can be, more patient than any teacher, more pitiful than any father, more comforting than any mother,—that is the day of his heavenly vision, the very birthday of his hope.

Isaiah says, "I saw." Is it, then, given to man to be so sure of spiritual phenomena? So it seems from this Book. The basis of this confidence is in the spiritual consciousness out of which Moses spoke when he said, "I saw the passing pageant of the goodness of the Lord;" out of which Paul spoke when he said, "I saw a light above the brightness of the sun, and heard a voice out of the radiance calling me by name;" out of which John spoke when he said, "In the midst of the golden candlesticks I saw One like unto the Son of Man, girt with a golden girdle, and holding the seven stars in his hand." Not more real was the mountain whereon Moses stood, or the splendid highway over which Paul was traveling, or the rocks of Patmos whereon the waves broke into spray,—not more real were these than the visions unfolded to human spirits there.

The definiteness of the prophet's memory is startling,—in the death-year of King Uzziah. Happy the man who keeps a journal and records the date of this and that event. I know one who is able to say: "It was on the 19th of March, 1886, I began to be led by the Spirit." But others there are who must say; "I do not know just when I entered the new life. I think it was some time between sixteen and twenty years of age. The

change came so gradually that I glided into the consciousness of a definite relationship to God as a ship glides out of a region of ice into a warmer zone." God does not deal with us all alike. There are flowers that burst into bloom, and there are others that gradually unfold. Let not the man with the calendar say to the man who develops faith more slowly, "You are not a Christian." And let not the man whose conversion was a process rather than a single act, despise the testimony of him who said, "I remember the day, the hour, the spot where Love Divine first found me."

There are those who covet certain definite data of religious life, who must content themselves with general, rather than particular experiences. You do not remember the day, or even the year, when you first became conscious of self; you do not remember the day, or even the year, when you left childhood behind you, and became a man. But, if you are a man, if you are bearing burdens that only men can bear, thinking a man's thoughts, doing a man's work, the definite memory of manhood's beginning may well be ignored. The fact that one has reached the slope or summit of a mountain, is proof that he began the ascent sometime, somewhere. Are you pure in heart, poor in spirit, meek, mournful over sin, a lover of peace? Then somewhere, along the path your feet have trod, you caught a glimpse of the Eternal, you spoke to the Infinite, and heard His voice, and the process of your transfiguration began, which shall not end

until you pass through the gates that open inwardly to the temple of all truth.

Manifold was the effect of Isaiah's vision. First, he became keenly conscious of his own deficiency: "I am a man of unclean lips." The inevitable effect of the vision of God, is a deeper knowledge of our own need. It may be difficult to determine whether a picture is a copy of a masterpiece, or the masterpiece itself, but put it beside the original, and all the imperfections and immaturity of the copy are obvious. Here is a sheet of paper called pure white. But when, by the aid of scientific instruments, you produce a pure white light, this paper appears an ashen gray, or a faded yellow. It cannot stand the vision of pure white. The humblest souls on earth, the most ready to confess their faults, are those who have the clearest vision of God. In His light we see not only light but darkness. The very thought of God awakens in us a sense of sin.

There are some who delay their first step in Christian living because they have never felt the weight of sin. They look for "conviction," long for it, even pray for it. But how quickly it follows the sight of God! Let them pray for that; let them pray for the vision of Jesus Christ.

Another result of the vision is quietness and assurance. There is nothing a prophet more needs than a calm outlook into the future, the little future of these years of our lives, and the greater future of the centuries. No one of us is well quali-

fied to be a soldier in the ranks of the army of reform until he sees that, whatever happens, God is on the throne. There are many disquieting sights, many disquieting thoughts. In vain the psalmist admonishes us, "Fret not thyself because of evil doers." We do fret ourselves when wickedness flourishes, and vice runs riot and appears to be immune from penalty. We do fret ourselves when falsehood flaunts her banner in the face of truth. We are cast down when we see how full the world is of frauds, and shams, and snares, and traps for men, and wrecks of men. Superficially, the race seems to be a failure, the world a sad experiment. There are not wanting those who are ready to declare modern civilization only a thin veneer, and Christianity itself impotent to create a new order of things. There are not wanting those who prophesy the ultimate and even speedily approaching end of the present social and industrial systems, in bloodshed and universal violence. But he who sees what Isaiah saw has no such troubled dream. God on the throne is the pledge that good shall be the final goal of ill. God on the throne means that He will make the wrath of man to praise Him and restrain the remainder. God on the throne means that out of what seems remediless confusion perfect order and beauty are to come. God on the throne means, not merely "moonlight on a troubled sea," but the calming of the sea. God on the throne means all things working together to accomplish His good will.

We are like children in a machine shop, who see

this wheel revolving one way, and that wheel revolving another way, this wheel revolving rapidly, and that wheel revolving slowly, and who conclude that therefore there is no plan, no unifying force about it all. Or, to use another figure, we stand by a great loom, and see one side of the fabric, and it seems to be a crazy patchwork of shapes and colors. Isaiah caught a glimpse of the Engineer and saw that He was master of all the wheels and belts and pulleys. Isaiah caught a glimpse of the Weaver at the loom and saw that the pattern was before Him all the while. So, ever afterward, whoever was on the throne of Judah, whoever ruled Israel, there was one man absolutely calm and confident, knowing that the King of kings was on the Great Throne, and that all earthly monarchs are but His puppets, with paper crowns and scepters of straw. He was like Robert Browning's man, who "never dreamed though right were worsted, wrong would triumph." "What is your carpenter doing now?" said a Roman scoffer to an early Christian. "He is making a coffin for your emperor," was the reply. And He was. Nero is but a noxious memory. We name our dogs Nero. The Carpenter of Nazareth is on the throne of power, "Ancient of days yet ever new."

The vision of God revealed to Isaiah his need of cleansing, made him long for holiness, and that moment he was holy. In Maurice Hewlett's "Forest Lovers," there is a girl who, though born of noble blood, has been reared amidst squalor. When Prosper, the clean-mouthed and summer-hearted

knight takes her from her hut to save her from death, he says, "Isoult, what is it you want?" And she answers, "I want to be what I have never been." "What then is that?" "To be clean." The prodigal wanted a new robe before he sat down at his father's table. The old robe was soiled and worn. Jesus spoke a parable of a man who made a feast, and required that those who sat with him should have appropriate raiment. What does that represent,—the white robe, the wedding garment? Cleansing. All the ablutions of the Old Testament ceremonials and all the baptisms of the New, the baptism of water and the baptism of fire, are designed to teach the Divine beauty and the human necessity of holiness. If it took fire to purify the lips of the young Hebrew prophet, nothing less than fire will avail for us. To this end came the Holy Spirit, at Pentecost, His symbol lambent tongues of flame. To this end God's eternal Spirit is in the world to-day, ready to visit us who say,

> "Refining Fire, go through my heart,
> Illuminate my soul."

Swiftly the angel was sent to touch the lips that cried for cleansing, and always swiftly pardon follows penitence, and peace accompanies pardon. Do we know this—that the desire for purity is itself purifying? He who desires God has God. He who hungers and thirsts after righteousness is filled. It is only the Divine within the heart that can make us feel the need of Christ. "No man

can call Jesus Lord except by the Holy Spirit." When we understand this, innumerable barriers fall, innumerable obstacles disappear, innumerable objections vanish into thin air,—when it is understood that the first faint desire for God is itself a step toward God.

There is yet another sequel to the vision. This was the end of it all,—"Who will go for us?" The value of the vision was not to the prophet alone, but to Judah and Jerusalem immediately, and to all the race ultimately. He who sees God hears Him also, and the voice that says, "Come and see," says, "Go and tell." The fatal weakness of much of our religion is that it is regarded as an end in itself. No soul is saved for its own sake. No soul is truly saved until it becomes, in some sense, a saviour to other souls. Light is not light until it impinges on some material substance. The interstellar spaces are black because they contain nothing for light to touch and transfigure. The saving grace of God is not manifest until the soul that was comforted comforts others with the comfort wherewith it was comforted of God.

The sun does not shine for itself; stars do not beam, nor flowers bloom, nor birds sing, for themselves. We do not light a candle for the candle's sake, but that it may illumine the room. Our spirits are the candles of the Almighty, and, to carry the figure farther, we give light only as we are consumed. A psalmist says, "The zeal of thine house hath eaten me up," and such is the testimony of many another life of faith. I have

been thinking of such a life, a woman into whose home there came, long years ago, a sorrow that was absolutely appalling. Her youngest child, the darling of her heart, was stolen away, kidnapped, and the world well knows that little boy's name. In the hour of her great grief, she saw the throne of God spanning like a bridge of gold her gulf of woe, and she was comforted. Then she heard the voice of duty calling, "Who will go for us?" and she said, "Here am I; send me." So, every Sunday morning for twenty-five years, through summer heat and winter storm, she has gone to the house of God at half-past nine to teach a class of children in the Master's name. Many another there is, in whose life noble service followed the vision of the Eternal. One is a missionary among the Arabs on the border of the Great Desert. One is a settlement worker in the slums of a great city. One is a teacher of boys in a private school, and he thinks more of doing well his work, of developing fine character in his scholars, than he does of drawing his salary. One is a child who has never spoken an unkind word since a certain day when, after a storm of passion, he was led to see his weakness and to pray for inward strength. The Lambhood of God has made him gentle.

Another is a business man, the rule of whose life is to mark every day, to make it memorable, by a work of mercy and help. I have known him, late at night, to go out upon the street, seeking an opportunity for humane service, because the day had been too crowded to permit his fulfillment of a vow

to close the record of no day without a message given or a ministry performed in the spirit of Jesus Christ. Still another is a woman who reveals almost incredible patience in dealing with her family of riotous and fretful children. All these, and others like them, are in the succession of prophets and apostles, servants of the Most High, —servants whom their Lord admits to friendship with Himself. "Ye are My friends, if you do whatsoever I command you."

VIII

CHRISTIAN CERTAINTIES

"A second way of ascertaining the nature of the Word of God is to consult every variety of Christian experience. Let testimony be sought from rich and poor, from the densely ignorant as well as from the highly enlightened, from men of affairs, from poets and philosophers and scientists, from those who have been rescued out of gross degradation and from those who have never known any other than the Christian life; in all these persons alike, with or without historical knowledge or a critical theory of the facts of the New Testament, with or without a philosophy or a theology, not seldom with irrational notions as to the great outstanding features of Christian belief, there has been created a new and higher, a supernatural, Divine consciousness."

(*Realities of Christian Theology.* Clarence Augustine Beckwith. pp. 324, 325.)

"It would be incredible, if it were not true, that we still have assailants and critics of Christianity in our midst for whom the religious consciousness simply does not exist; they discuss what they think the claims of Christianity and pronounce judgment against it, but the chief witness is never called. Such grotesque travesties of justice ought in the future to be laughed out of court. Happily there are signs of the coming of a better day. It is good to be told by a competent authority that 'the natural history of the religious consciousness as it manifests itself in the life of the individual has now taken its place among the sciences.'"

(*Ancient Faith and Modern Doubt.* Professor W. R. Inge.)

VIII

CHRISTIAN CERTAINTIES

"One thing I know, that, whereas I was blind, now I see." John ix. 25.

Blindness is one of the commonest afflictions in Egypt and Palestine. It has been so from time immemorial. There are various reasons why it is so. A distinguished oculist, impressed by the multitude of people in those countries who suffer from diseases of the eye, of one kind and another, gives it as his opinion that a liberal use of soap for a single generation would reduce the number of blind by one half, and that the application of very simple remedies would reduce the number of the remainder by two thirds.

Blindness and leprosy are the two most frequently mentioned ailments in the Scriptures. Some of Jesus' most wonderful miracles were wrought upon blind men and lepers. It must have been so in the nature of things, for His miracles were, almost without exception, benevolences, and who needed help so much as these?

The blind men of the New Testament form a very interesting group of characters. Of them we know the name of only one, Bartimeus, the son of Timeus, of Jericho, who sat begging at the road-

side. The blind man whose words I have quoted is nameless, but of his personal history, of his mental characteristics, and of the miracle which restored him to sight, we know more than we do about Bartimeus. This entire chapter—the ninth of John—is given up to the story of his healing and the circumstances which attended it. John is the only one of the four evangelists who mentions the circumstance, but that is not strange, for he is the only one of the four who gives us an account of the Judean ministry, a period of about two months.

In the case of Bartimeus, it was the blind man who heard the sound of tramping feet, and, learning that Jesus was passing, cried to Him out of darkness for sight. In this case, Jesus sees the blind man, and apparently without any request on his part, heals and delivers him from hopeless despair. Hopeless despair, for he was blind from his birth. There is this difference between a man born blind and one who has lost his sight by accident or disease,—the latter knows what sight is, knows something of the manifold glory of earth and sky, and has a little fringe of green around his desert, a little world of beauty which memory recreates for him at his bidding.

I need not rehearse the story of the miracle; it has no part in the purpose of this hour. Nor need I engage in argument for miracles; that is foreign to the idea in view. It is the mental attitude of the man that most concerns us, his absolute assurance of a fact, a great fact, the greatest fact in the

world to him. The enemies of Jesus were trying to confuse this man. They were learned, adroit, trained in the tricks of casuistry, and they attempted, by critical examination, and cross-examination, to lead him to say something that might compromise the claims or the character of Jesus. "What did He say? What did He do? How did He do it? Did He claim to be a prophet? Did He call Himself the Son of God? Are you the blind man we saw at the gate this morning? Were you blind from birth? Has He given sight to others? Where is He now? Did He say where He was going? Did He say He was Lord of the Sabbath? Did He claim supernatural power?" These, or such questions, came so numerously and so rapidly that he declined to answer them, falling back upon the one thing he was sure of, the one fact that was indisputable. It was as if He said, "I know nothing about where He is or what He is, or what He claims to be; one thing I know, one thing only, but I do know that,—yesterday I was blind and to-day I see." In so saying, he was wise, He had no gift of logic or disputation. He had no scholarship or reputation to measure with theirs. But he had a fact, a fact of experience, and he stood squarely upon that, facing all comers and defying all doubt with, "This one thing I know."

I have said he had no gift of logic. Nevertheless, there was logic in his fact. Logic does not necessarily involve orderly processes of intellection. There is more logic in a simple demonstration than in a whole volume of reasoning. An

old philosopher was contending that there is no such thing as motion. His opponent in the singular debate simply arose and strode across the room. He proved motion by moving. A man wrote a book to prove that no vessel could cross the Atlantic propelled by steam. A steamship carried the first copies of his book across the sea. There may have been logic in his argument, but there was better logic in the steam. Great is the power of a single fact.

The last half century has witnessed a marvelous awakening of interest in the natural and applied sciences. A passion for facts possesses the modern world. A practical scientist would much rather discover a fact in his field than a nugget of gold. A naturalist has given us a book on "Ants." He has been studying ants. He knows all about their nature and their habits. He has discovered that they have their systems of government, their armies, and governors, and servants, and tramps. Think of a great man spending years in cultivating the intimate acquaintance of insects! Are insects so important as all that? Can we put this knowledge to any practical account? No—there is no thought of that. But the world is eager for knowledge, knowledge of things large and small, near and far, and nothing that promises the reward of knowledge is too remote or too inconsequential to be studied.

To be sure, there are sciences which do not deal with facts, which have nothing to do with concrete phenomena. They treat of relations, hy-

potheses, probabilities. Such a science is that of pure mathematics in which the suppositions are entirely arbitrary. But the sciences in which most of us are interested rest upon observation and experiment, and the bases of these are in facts. So pervasive is the practical spirit in the world that the impression prevails in some quarters that science affords us the only certain ground, that religion is not a science because destitute of facts, and hence can have no standing among scientific thinkers.

Permit me to remind you that religion is a science. It has its speculative side; we call that dogmatic theology, which is a study of relations. But it has also its practical side, on which we find a firm foundation of facts. The Christian believer has a ground of certainty in a wide range of positive phenomena. He is as fully justified in saying, "I know" as any man who comes to us with his volume of facts gathered by the help of microscope, or scalpel, or crucible. Christianity has its certainties. "We speak that we do know, and testify that we have seen."

One of the first facts that confronts us in the study of the Christian religion is that in the Holy Scriptures we have a volume so rich and strong, so noble and inspiring, that the world's libraries do not contain its equal; a Book of sixty-six parts, written by at least thirty-eight different authors, in different countries, covering a period of sixteen hundred years, yet the whole cohering by an interior principle of unity so remarkable as to sug-

gest that it must have had, from the beginning, a supervising Mind. Measured by the greatness of its subjects, by the sublimity of its treatment of them, by the perfection of its ideals, by its "verbal felicities and intensities," by its relation to the problems of human life and destiny—the questions of to-day and to-morrow—by its historic influence in the world, and by its effect upon the lives of those who receive it, it is so different from other books, from other so-called sacred books, that its Divine origin is self-authenticated.

Treat the Book as we may, reject it as some have done, neglect it as we all do, it is yet a fact to be considered, to be accounted for, to be numbered among the great certainties of our faith. If it be not a fact to stand on, it is at least a fact to start from, that our Book possesses such qualities as have evoked incomparable tributes from the deepest and keenest minds. Coleridge says, "It finds me at greater depths of my being than any other book." Sir Isaac Newton says, "I find more sure marks of authenticity in it than in any profane history whatever." Thomas Carlyle says, of a single portion of it—the Book of Job, "A noble book! All men's book!" Edmund Burke says, "I have read the Bible morning, noon and night, and I have been a happier and better man for such reading." William H. Seward says, "The hope of human progress is suspended on the ever-growing influence of this Book."

I do not quote such tributes as arguments supporting the supernatural character of the Bible.

I quote them in support of the proposition that the text-book of Christianity is, itself, a great fact. Our first fact is the Book, so full of God that "it thrills us like the touch of a living hand;" so full of truth and grace that it has a message for us when we wreathe our brides and when we shroud our dead.

There is a further fact, that in this Book we have the historic basis of a Gospel which appeals to the entire range of human faculties. It appeals to the reason. It has never numbered among its adherents more than a third of the population of the globe, but it dominates the really constructive races of men. It appeals to the imagination; the art of the world is liberally devoted to the cause of religion, whether in architecture, painting, music, or poetry. It appeals to the emotions; tears of grief and songs of joy are mingled in the manifold music of the Church; there is no story that so melts the heart of the sons of men as that of Jesus and the cross. It appeals to the conscience; the triumph of Christianity in the Fiji Islands is significant. When John Hunt went there in 1838, children were sold to be killed and eaten, but when he preached the Gospel to them, their consciences were so stirred, they became so penitent, that great numbers of them would cry aloud and bewail their former depravity. You could not buy a human being in those islands to-day at any price. This Gospel appeals also to the will,—it commands men's service.

What is the strongest human passion? Is it the

desire for property, or the lure of the unknown, or the lust of power, or the passion known as love? What will not men do for gold? They will sail stormy seas, traverse deathly deserts, or brave Alaskan snows. The passion for discovery led the Genoese sailor to trust his tiny caravels to an uncharted ocean, led Balboa to plunge into the thickets of an unknown wilderness, led Nansen to isolate himself for three years in the vast wastes of a region of eternal ice. And all that man can do or suffer, men have done and suffered for the sake of love. Is there any passion stronger than these? There is. Look at Paul; look at Xavier; look at William Carey, and Adoniram Judson, and William Taylor, and David Livingstone, and Dr. Grenfell. This is the missionary motive, and it is stronger than desire for gold, or the passion for discovery, or the impulse of human love. It is stronger than these because it is more persistent. The Argonaut despairs at length, the discoverer returns with well-earned fame, the lover's ardor is quenched with age or altered ideals, but the cross-bearer, the messenger of peace, toils on a lifetime, content to do his Master's will, even though he see no result of his labor. Even in his death a Christian passion for the winning of the souls of men burns none the feebler, and his life goes out in prayer for those his Master died to save. David Livingstone was found dead in the attitude of prayer in his rude hut in the forest. Horace Pitkin, who met his death in China during the Boxer rebellion, sends back this message to America,

"Tell my wife to take care of our little son, and when he is a man, let him come here, and take my place." This Gospel commands the services of men, it appeals to the heroic in man. And, in truth, is there any faculty to which it does not speak with power? Not one. It sweeps the whole horizon. It was made for man. It was made by Him who made man.

And now another fact. He who said, "One thing I know, that, whereas I was blind, now I see," had hold of an interior fact, a fact of consciousness, and these are the ultimate facts from which there is no appeal. A man born blind, to whom there comes the sudden revelation of the visible universe, the splendid panorama of hills and valleys, rivers and clouds, is conscious of a change within him, which makes him something he was not before, makes him more a man than he has been. Ask him, "How old are you?" and he may say, "I did not begin to live until I began to see." Such a miracle is a figure of what occurs in a life which accepts Christ as personal Friend and Saviour. It is only when our spiritual eyes are opened we begin to live, begin to see things in their true light. Thorwaldsen, who was born in Copenhagen, when asked, "When were you born?" replied, "I do not know, but I arrived in Rome at such and such a time." He dated his birth from the beginning of his artistic education. Many another has dated the real commencement of his life from the beginning of his education, has said, "I did not begin to live until I read that

book, until I met that man." I have heard a famous scholar, a man of splendid endowment of heart and brain, say of one of his teachers, an obscure and humble person, who had given him his first impulse towards the ideal, "He was the father of the best part of me."

No one of us begins to live until he learns what to live for, how to live aright, to live in the love of God, in the joy of His strength, in dutiful obedience to His will. If acquaintanceship with Jesus Christ introduces us to that view of life, if the study of His life inclines us to that view, then is not His power to affect us vitally a fact to be numbered among the impregnable data of consciousness? Much has been said of friendship, of culture by friendship, of friendship as the master passion. One of the most constant experiences of the Christian is a certain sense of the friendship of Jesus Christ. The important question, in determining the practical value of Christian experience, is not so much, What does Jesus do for us? as it is, What does His friendship do for us? If it sets us right, and helps to keep us right, makes us ashamed of all ignoble things, excites in us high and honorable aspirations, the fact of that friendship must be accounted of first importance in estimating the forces that make life great and strong and true.

IX

MY WITNESSES

"The old conception that Jesus in the act and article of His death paid for us a debt which we could not pay for ourselves made a strong appeal for Christian activity. Stronger, however, is the motive which the conception of the progressive, age-long work of a suffering Redeemer calls into life. Faith in Christ, present in the world, bearing our sins, and wounded in all our transgressions, cannot but persuade us, as it did Paul, that it is a privilege to fill up that which is lacking in the afflictions of Christ.[1] We may endure with Him the weight of the world's woe; we may be laborers together with Him; we may share with Him the work of redeeming the world. Our connection with Him is real, not sentimental. We are genuine actors on the stage, and upon us rests a heavy responsibility. By our wilfulness we quench His spirit, obstruct His work, lead Him anew to Gethsemane. By our faithfulness we glorify Him. We augment His efficiency in the world, and hasten the day of His victory. The battle we are fighting is a real one. We are not mimic soldiers, marching and countermarching on a stage. Great issues are being decided by our conduct. If the world battle is won, it will be won in and through humanity. It will be by the Divine energy expressing itself through obedient human wills. Man is an indispensable agent in the vast work of healing the open wound of the world. This complete identification of ourselves with Christ in redemption makes a deeper call on our love and energy than does gratitude for a finished work. To us, as to Simon, is given the privilege of helping the Christ to bear His cross up Calvary."

(*Atonement in Literature and Life.* Charles Allen Dinsmore. pp. 242, 243.)

[1] Col. i. 24.

IX

MY WITNESSES

"Ye shall be witnesses unto Me." Acts i. 8.

The last words of our friends are ever memorable. Even though we have not heard or heeded their other sayings, we give ear to their speech as they pass from us into the gathering mists of the world unseen.

The text is a part of the last recorded message of Jesus. "When He had spoken these things . . . He was taken up." He never spoke a useless word, much less a false one. So, whatever value we attach to His other utterances—and all He said was weighty and momentous—we must esteem His last words, His valedictory, of superlative importance.

Three things mark the closing address of the Master to His disciples: His confidence,—He knows how great is the work the little company of His friends are to undertake, yet He speaks as though He were sure of the eventual triumph of their cause; His consciousness of His own place in the preaching of the Gospel,—they are to preach His Gospel, do what He had commanded, be witnesses unto Him; then there is His clear conception of the plan by which His Gospel is to be con-

veyed throughout all the world. It is a simple plan, —sublime in its simplicity. First, the disciples are to be prepared by a spiritual empowerment; then they are to testify everywhere. That is all, but it is more than seems at first. Out of that plan are to come churches, missionary societies, Young Men's Christian Associations, Societies of Christian Endeavor, Brotherhoods of Andrew and Philip, Federations of Student Volunteers, and a thousand other organized agencies designed to carry the commission of Jesus Christ into effect.

On the whole, it is the very simplicity of the method by which He proposes to evangelize the world that impresses us most profoundly. It is all summed up in two words, "My witnesses." There is nothing here about churches and sacraments, the Bible and the ministry, public worship and sermons. There is nothing here that prohibits these. Presently they take their proper place in the developments of the Apostolic age. But, at first, all emphasis is laid on the personal testimony of the personal witness concerning Jesus Christ.

Very much depends upon our correct understanding of the office of a witness. The word "witness" as used in the New Testament, may refer to one who is a spectator; to one who tells what he has seen; to one who testifies in court, or to one who seals his testimony by suffering or by death. The first three meanings are practically included in our Lord's word, and the fourth has often been imposed upon the others by the hostility of the world to the Christian faith.

The first call of those who would be disciples of Jesus Christ, is to an actual experience. We are expected to form our opinions concerning Him from contact with Him, from knowledge of Him, rather than from speculation about Him. His is the call of that friend of Job who says, "Acquaint now thyself with Him." His is the ideal of the Apostle, who thus expresses the purpose of his life, "That I may know Him, and the power of His resurrection."

There is this difference between knowledge and belief: knowledge is based upon experience; belief is the result of a mental process. He whose testimony is founded upon knowledge is sure. He whose testimony is founded upon an intellectual process may be shaken. The Spirit of Christ does a twofold work in human salvation; He works for us, and in us. What Jesus Christ has done for men is important to men, but what He does in men is more important to the world. All the world knows that He lived an ideal life, and that He died a hero's death. We believe He conquered death, and ascended to be our eternal Intercessor. This is what He does for us. But there is another world, an interior, personal world, in which Christ offers to prove His title as Saviour. What goes on in this inner world each of us is best qualified to say for himself:—whether He subdues the misrule of passions here, whether He brings order out of this inward anarchy, whether He gives us the beauty of holiness for the ashes of penitence, whether He strengthens the will to make the right

choice between good and evil, whether He casts out fear and causes us to rest in the midst of endless agitation. All this falls within the sacred precincts of one's own spiritual consciousness, and the facts of this life, this world, are the subject matter of our testimony.

It is the duty of the witness to interpret his experience to those who are strangers to it in terms that they can comprehend. The witness is to know, and then to translate his knowledge into the language of earth. Notwithstanding the very natural impulse of one who has been fortunate to desire to impart his joy to others; in spite of the strong social tendency to share our good news with our fellows, there is in religion a counteracting impulse away from publicity. The mystic is prone to be content to muse upon the miracle of his fellowship with God, but the Christian mystic may not stop at musing. "While I was musing the fire burned: then spake I with my tongue." Speech—this is the great human element in the program of the Kingdom of God. "Go quickly, and tell . . . that He is risen from the dead." "Run, speak to that young man." "Pray for me that utterance may be given me, that I may make known the power and mystery of the Gospel." "Let him that heareth say, Come." Is this mere lip-service? It is lip-service, but not mere lip-service. Consider the little less than omnipotent power of speech. "Where the word of a king is, there is power." It is the Word of God that is a sword, "living and energetic." Words, spoken

or written, have created revolutions. Words, supported by mental and moral energy, have uplifted nations. Never do we approach so nearly the dignity of creation—I mean the dignity of being ourselves creators,—as when we take the meaningless elements of speech, and by combining them, give shape to thought.

"I have known a word hang starlike
O'er a dreary waste of years,
And it only shone the brighter
Looked at through a mist of tears.

"I have seen a spirit, calmer
Than the calmest lake, and clear
As the heavens that bent above it,—
Ne'er a wave of doubt or fear,

"But a storm has swept above it,
And its deepest depths were stirred,
Nevermore to slumber,—
Only by a word."

Sometimes the effect of a word is to calm a storm rather than to storm a calm. It is written in one of the Gospels that when Jesus was about to confer the power of speech upon a dumb man, He looked up to heaven and sighed, groaning inwardly. It has been remarked that possibly the Master hesitated before He conferred such vast power upon a human life. We are accustomed to confess the power of a word for good; it may be Jesus was thinking of the possible power of speech for evil.

It is an amazing fact that the whole civilized world was evangelized during the first few cen-

turies of the Christian era. That was before the age of printing. Preaching was almost wholly by the living voice. Hume observes that the rapid propagation of the Gospel was in large part due to the fact that every Christian felt it laid upon him as a part of his profession of faith in Christ, to bear verbal witness to his knowledge of Christ. The author of the last book in the Bible speaks of a vision in which he sees the Church triumphant, the spirits of the redeemed who had overcome "by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony." What an honor it is, thus conferred upon the ministry of human speech,—to be accounted worthy of mention in the same moment with the Divine Sacrifice!

That there has been a decline in the volume of verbal testimony is doubtless due to the fact that in recent ages the Church has multiplied its agencies for disseminating the Gospel. The printed Bible is the property of all men, and not alone literature, but art, and philanthropy, and civilization itself furnish a manifold witness for Christ. Moreover, separate orders of pastors, evangelists, missionaries, teachers, and other official witnesses have in some degree diminished the sense of responsibility that once rested upon every Christian. There can be no doubt, however, that the same obligation rests upon us all who profess the faith to make known to men the power of Christ's indwelling grace. Who doubts that Christianity would take a long step forward if all its members were

to acknowledge and fulfill their ministry as faithful witnesses of their Master?

Our first duty is to know. Our second duty is to tell. The third duty is to recognize the fact that the world is, and always will be, a court before which the Christian is expected to testify in the case of Faith versus Unfaith. I mean to say, the world expects him thus to testify. There was a Christian business man who was greatly interested in the welfare of his employés. He provided generously for their compensation, for their comfort while they were at work. He had the habit of remembering the families of his laborers with gifts at Christmas time. One day he spoke to a clerk on the subject of religion, and as he did so, apologized for intruding upon a realm which was foreign to their business relations. The clerk said, "You need not apologize; I have often wondered why you never spoke of that matter before. I have been disappointed that you did not mention the subject long ago." Then said the merchant, "In that case I apologize to you for my neglect, and I will ask my Master's forgiveness." That man had the right idea of his duty. It was his business as a confessing Christian, and it is ours, to let no seasonable opportunity go unemployed to speak a good word for the faith. Do you remember that sweet and pathetic story in one of Ian MacLaren's books, of the young minister who put aside his academic discourse and preached a simple, persuasive sermon, because there came over him that

Sunday morning his mother's memory, and her words, "Speak a good word for Jesus Christ"? That Scotch mother's advice appeals to laymen as well as to ministers.

The brightest pages of Christian biography contain the records of men and women, some ignorant and some learned, some humble and some conspicuous, who made it the rule of their lives to be witnesses to their faith,—men like William Taylor, John Vassar, and Henry Clay Trumbull, and women like Hannah Whitall Smith, Jennie Fowler Willing, and Frances Willard. Wherever these people went, and whomsoever they met, they were good witnesses. They acted exactly as if they were the authorized agents of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. They were, and so are we, but we have forgotten our commission. Let us look at our credentials. "Ye shall be witnesses unto me." Where? "In Jerusalem." Where is that? It is where we live, where we are best known, where it takes courage of a high degree to speak about religion. Where else? "In Judea." Where is that? It is the country round about home, familiar ground, our neighborhood, the adjoining township, or nearby cities. Where else? "In Samaria." Where is that? Among people who are not friendly to our faith. Where else? "Unto the uttermost part of the earth." That is sufficiently inclusive. So the whole earth is to be belted and girdled with Christian testimony. So the witness of Christ is to be like the British drumbeat, heard around the world.

To what extent the Kingdom of God has been extended by the personal testimony of Christians no statistics can tell, but it is certain that a very much larger number of persons have been won to the Christian view of life by personal and unofficial speech than by formal public discourse, by debate, by learned argument, or even by song.

We have considered the duty of the Christian to know, to tell, to recognize the world as the court in which he is expected to testify. Now a word as to the cross-examination, by which I mean that part of the testimony in which the witness is compelled to vindicate his story, to authenticate it. It is the most difficult part of the examination, and it is where a great many witnesses break down and annul the force of their testimony. The cross-examination of the Christian is the inspection of his life by those who say, "Prove your faith by your works." A good life is not a complete testimony for Christ, but a verbal witness without a good life is worse than useless. The testimony of the lips, unsustained by the witness of the life, is like a coin which has the proper image and superscription, but is spurious, counterfeit, made of base metal. The testimony of the life without the witness of the lips is like a coin which rings true, is made of the right metal, but has no image or superscription. (I have had such coins returned to me, not exactly as worthless, but as of doubtful value.)

Napoleon said to his soldiers in Egypt, "Twenty centuries look down upon you from yonder pyramids." Two worlds look down upon the

soldiers of Jesus Christ. The spirits of the just made perfect rejoice when we glorify God, and the spirits of unjust men, and of just men not yet made perfect in Christ, listen to what we say in answer to the old, old, yet ever new question, "What think ye of Christ?" There is an interesting story of Doré, the artist, that once, crossing the Italian frontier, he had mislaid his passport and was called upon to prove his identity. This he did by taking a sheet of common paper and a piece of charcoal and tracing the homely, manly features of Victor Emmanuel. The officers knew that only Doré could draw like that. Challenged by the world as we are, is it not for us to trace, here and now, on the rough surface of our common lives, with only such instruments as our ordinary circumstances afford, the character of our King? "By this shall all men know that ye are My disciples."

X

LIFE'S GREAT MEANING

"The preëminence of Jesus does not lie in the mere fact that He did this or said that, but rather in the general impression of His life as the sublime exhibition of a perfect trust in God and a supreme love of man. He demonstrates what human life ought to be and what it can be. He gives men not only a precept to follow, but a life-motive sufficiently powerful to enable them to put the precept into action. He illustrates the victory of unselfish love, and He creates in us the love that actually serves and sacrifices and conquers. By His purity He shames us out of our wrongdoing, and by His doctrine and practice of forgiveness He encourages us to outgrow our sins. He makes known the heart of God by living wholly unto God, and He thereby warms our hearts to a loving-kindness that creates the kingdom of God. By His example He reveals the way of life; by the winsome and forceful influence of His personality He creates in us the earnest desire to enter and the ability to walk securely in the way of eternal life."

(*The Church of To-day.* Joseph Henry Crooker. pp. 168, 169.)

X

LIFE'S GREAT MEANING

"What is your life?" James iv. 14.

In some form this question appears in all serious literature, ancient and modern. Who of us has not followed the psalmist's thought, who says: "When I consider Thy heavens, the work of Thy fingers, the moon and the stars which Thou hast ordained; what is man, that Thou art mindful of him?" In the chamber where the miracle of birth is enacted, or by the couch where the mystery of death occurs, we have asked the meaning of life. On the bank of the majestic river that rolls its volume to the sea, or by the shore of that high-sounding sea, we have wondered, "So runs my dream, but what am I?" Plucking a flower out of the crannied wall, or beneath the bright procession of the October stars, the query rises in our minds as in the psalmist's, the Apostle's, the poet's, "What is the nature and what the end of this life of ours?" But the answer is far from satisfying. If we look to nature for a solution of the problem, we shall be disappointed. The birth chamber and the couch of death are alike dark with mystery, and the mystery is equally great whether it be the birth of a child or a bird,

whether the death be that of a man or of his dog. The river and the sea seem sublimely superior to the creature that questions them. The little flower might say with truth, "I am as wonderfully made as you are." The stars, if they were animate, might make reply, "And who are you, mere pencil-points in distant space, that you should dare to interrogate us?"

Nature is not particularly flattering to the pride of the man who seeks to know his own place in creation. The power of the natural forces crushes him; the beauty of the flower shames him; the bulk of the mountain overshadows him; the rapidity of sound and light outdistances him; the magnitude of the stellar space bewilders him. Innumerable things in the world,—mere things,—seem superior to human life. Yet man keeps on forever asking, "What is my life? So runs my dream, but what am I?" And man alone asks such a question. The river, the sea, the flower, the blazing star,—no one of these ever wrestled with the mystery of the meaning of its own existence. So, human life is the self-imposed problem of the universe.

But human life is not the only problem man sets himself to solve. He studies the natural forces and elements that seem superior to him, and lo! he conquers them. The river is navigated, tunnelled, bridged, turned out of its channel. The sea is dotted with the fleets and navies of nations. The wild flower is made to multiply in variety and grow in beauty and fragrance.

The stars are measured, weighed, analyzed. The mind of man more and more exercises dominion over matter. It is in this man is superior, akin to his Creator, exercising dominion.

A poet, among the giant trees of California, said he seemed to hear the venerable "redwoods" saying to him, "Your age is as nothing to ours." It must be granted that a tree may outlast a human body. But what if the body be to life only what the shell is to the unhatched bird? What if, within the body, there be a man that survives the body? Then the tree, the mountain, or the star, simply outlasts the shell which incases human life for a season. The mountain and the star last but do not live. "The thunderbolt may fall on me and crush me; yet am I superior to it, for I know and it does not." It is the power to know, to do, to choose, to will, to impress our will upon the world of force, that makes this human life something greater than it seems.

There are events in life, phases of life in the sight of which man seems an inconsiderable being, and human life a thing to be despised. Go to those provinces in Japan where, during the last winter, men and women and children were starving by thousands; where but a few years ago, the bodies of the starved were piled in heaps and burned. Go to that French coal mine, where eleven hundred men perished but yesterday by the explosion of fire damp. Have you ever seen the "bone-pit" at Havana, filled with innumerable scattered skeletons rudely dispossessed of their

sepulcher at the expiration of a brief grave-lease? Have you thought of the hundred thousand men who lie in shallow trenches in Manchuria,—white men and yellow men who fought in full sight of the world a little while ago? Human life is a small thing, it seems. Yes, it seems. But things are not often what they seem.

Look at Japan again, and you will see the Christian love of the world pouring its treasures into the starving province to feed the hungry and comfort the distressed. Some people believe in the brotherhood of man. Look again at that French coal mine; and you will see a collier struggling through the darkness and suffocating vapor with a comrade's dead body in his arms. "Greater love hath no man than this." The valley of dry bones at Havana is not so very different from *Père le Chaise* at Paris, only at Paris the remains are underground. But both at Paris and Havana you may see, in various forms, symbols of the faith that smiles on death and says, "I shall not wholly die." A new national life for Japan and Russia springs from the crimson dust of war. Things are not what they seem.

Edwin Markham saw the picture of "The Man With the Hoe," and in his poem laments the death of manhood, the tyranny of labor, the crushed spirit of the industrial slave. It is all in the picture,—the retreating forehead, the deficient chin, the lusterless eye, the hopeless heart. But there is another picture we must see. It is the "Angelus." The same peasant, in type, but by

his side is another, a girl. Love has entered the life of "the man with the hoe." In the distance rises a church spire, and it is the hour of prayer, and the peasants bow their heads. God has entered the life of "the man with the hoe." Life, with labor as its only companion, is poor indeed. But love transforms labor, and God sanctifies both, and life grows great and beautiful. The two pictures must be studied side by side.

And you must also study the artist. We have not seen all there is in a picture until we have seen the painter. He was right who said, "Man is never so like God as when he produces a work of art. He approaches the very power of God." He does actually create a landscape, or a figure, and as in Millet's case, or in Turner's, he puts a measureless expanse of earth and sky into a few square inches of canvas. What is life? Look at the artist at his best and say what life is. Or look at the sculptor. Buonarroti saw a block of marble and said, "I will make an angel out of it." And he did. Socrates, whose father was a sculptor, reflected, "Is it not better to turn man into the similitude of God than to turn marble into the similitude of man?" So he became a teacher. If you would know the power of human life, look at the teacher. He deals not with insensate marble, but with responsive human character. He says of his human material, "I will make a student of him," and he may. Consider the moral teacher who says of the student, "I will make a saint of him," and he may. Arnold Win-

kelried, gathering an armful of the enemy's spears into his own breast and "making way for liberty," is a fine type of soldierly service and sacrifice. But what shall we say of one who, as he fights his way over life's battlefield,—and life is a battle to the most fortunate of men—gathers into his heart of friendship one and another and another of his comrades, and at the battle's close, and life's, offers himself to the Great Commander, saying, "Here am I and those whom Thou hast given me." Now we begin to see the power and dignity of manhood. "Thou madest him a little lower than the angels; Thou crownedst him with glory and honor."

The Holy Scriptures contain two or three significant sentences touching the worth and meaning of human life. "Thou madest him a little lower than the angels" is a comfortable assurance. But let us read it in another version: "a little lower than God." Is there any confirmation of such a view of the greatness of man? We have it here: "The spirit of man is the candle of the Lord." And what is a candle? A miniature sun. The light that beams from the candle is the same kind of light that streams from the sun. It is one light, in morning star and twilight glowworm. The spirit of man is the same kind of spirit that dwells in God. God is a spirit; so is man,—a spirit, having a body. And the spirit of man is just as superior to matter, just as invulnerable to death, as God. God has made it so.

There is a wonder in a drop of water. Whistler

tried for weeks to paint it. It is a little ocean in itself. A trembling dewdrop on a spear of grass images in its bosom the sky as perfectly as does the sea itself. The sun's rays color it, and the winds ripple it, just as they do the sea. O, soul of man, thou hast in finite scope the image of thy God! Well art thou named "the being with the upturned face." Each of us is born of two worlds. We get our bodies from the earth, our spirits from above. Our lives are what our spirits make them. Our bodies are mere conveniences. We shall get along without them presently. Emerson said, "We can get along very well without the world." He knew that "the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal."

It is because our lives are greater than they seem that we are social beings. Brutes, afflicted, creep away to die alone. In our times of trial we crave the clasp of a brother's hand. It is because we are the children of God we have moral duties and obligations. A common mongrel cur is under no obligation to become a thoroughbred, a watchdog, a shepherd's assistant. A dwarfed bush on an arid plain is under no obligation to grow to towering height. But a human life, wherever found, is under obligation to grow towards God. It is because we are made in the likeness of God we have heart-hunger for him. As said Augustine: "Thou hast made us for Thyself, and in vain do we seek rest until we find it in Thee."

I stood on the seashore a while ago, and saw,

rising from the pier a tall staff, like the mainmast of a ship. From the top of the staff there ran to the base a strand of copper wires, ending in a curious device where sat a man pressing a key with dots and dashes. I heard no sound save the metallic click of the instrument for several minutes; then came a series of short, sharp explosions. The operator looked up and answered my unspoken question by saying, "It is the steamer *Bermudian*. I picked her up three hundred miles out. She is reporting the weather." On the shore of earth and time we stand and send out into the "darkness that girds our life around" our voiced and voiceless prayers. And not in vain do we sigh for God and cry to God. In unnumbered ways He makes Himself known to us. Our very longing for God is His Spirit working in us, whispering, "Seek, and ye shall find." And in His unfailing Word He bids us call Him the God of our lives. If, then, He be the God of our lives, our lives are dear to Him; nor are they bounded by the dates of birth and death. From God we came; to God we shall return. Whether we live or die, therefore; whether we wake or sleep, we are in His good care.

XI

THE ENLARGEMENT OF LIFE

"This is why Christianity is so much stronger and steadier than creeds and ecclesiastical institutions. Not seldom the Christ takes hold of men, not through their thinking and planning, but in spite of all that, and so we are often surprised at the amount of unofficial Christianity in the world. For the same reason—because the Christ is a fact of experience—even when the historical or metaphysical figure fades away, leaving only the ideal, men have still to reckon with a power of the first magnitude. The Christ of experience still abides. Under the name of The Anointed One, something still calls to our dormant spiritual capacities to awake. It makes us incorrigibly dissatisfied with evil in spite of our love for it. It prescribes for life a goal that is self-evident and imperative, and it seems to offer just what the soul desires of courage to work steadily for the highest when postponements and apparent failures are soliciting us to accept as our good something less than the best. In spite of doubts, the Christ-figure calls aloud to the deeps of our nature."

(*The Religion of a Mature Mind.* George Albert Coe. pp. 418, 419.)

XI

THE ENLARGEMENT OF LIFE

"He brought me forth also into a large place." Ps. xviii. 19.

Some one asked the chaplain of George IV if he felt no fear when preaching to royalty, and the good man replied, "I forget that there are princes before me and remember only that there are souls to instruct in godliness." The author of this psalm forgot that he was a king when he wrote these verses, and remembered only that he was a soul, that he had been helped, and by Whom he had been helped.

There are three singular facts about this psalm. It occurs twice in the Holy Scriptures, once in II Samuel and once in the Psalter. It contains two verses quoted in the New Testament, one in Romans and the other in Hebrews. These verses are ascribed to Christ, as they appear in the New Testament, so we may believe that it is something more than a psalm of David,—that King David's Lord speaks through it.

But here, at the nineteenth verse, it is a human soul speaking. He is rehearsing the many mercies of the Lord. He has just said, "He delivered me from my strong enemy. He drew me out of many waters. He was my stay." You know what a

stay is in building. It is a prop. As applied to persons, a stay is a stand-by, and the Greek for stand-by is "Paraclete," and we translate it "Comforter" or "Advocate." "If any man sin we have an Advocate with the Father." So the psalmist says, "The Lord was my Advocate." Now follows the text,—"He brought me forth also into a large place." And this is not the least precious fact here adverted to, by any means.

David was born in a small place, moved in a small circle until the Lord led him out. Not at once was he led into a large place. He mounted to the throne by way of many a hardship and many a battle. It was so with Joseph. He reached the palace by way of the prison. But he came to the larger place in time, as did Abraham before him. Ur of the Chaldees was a small place. Abraham had no outlook there, but he found a large place in Canaan, a large place on earth, and a large place in history. Even so was Moses led. Egypt was a small place,—not small in extent of dominion, nor in its power among the nations of the world,—but its horizon was small. The palace is a poor place for a prophet. Better the desert. Better the meadows of Midian. Better the mountains of Moab. Better the wandering through the wilderness. Better the Sinai of law, the Nebo of glory.

This has been the song of all God's servants in every age,—"He brought me forth also into a large place." Obedience to God never contracts our powers. Christ does not lead men backward, but

onward, upward. Matthew was led into a large place when he left the toll-booth to follow Jesus. Peter had never seen anything larger than the Sea of Galilee until Jesus made him a fisher of men. Paul at his best was only a theological hair-splitter, a heresy-hunter, until Christ appeared to him and filled his heart with a passion for the preaching of the Gospel and the glory of the cross. If the voice of patriarch and prophet and apostle could be heard to-day it would cry, "Never say 'No' to God. If He call thee, go. He will lead thee into a large place."

No experience is more common to the most of us than a certain contempt for the littleness of the things by which we are compelled to live. We are crowded and hemmed in by our circumstances. We are painfully limited. The farm boy who leaves the country goes to the city to seek a more abundant life. He dreams the city calls him to large enterprises. He does not know how cramped are the lodgings of most dwellers in the city, how small a part of it he will occupy, how easily the solitary individual is lost in the crowd. James A. Garfield heard the call of the sea when he was a lad, and only the love of a widowed mother kept him from following a seafaring life. Why is the sea so attractive to many? Because of its bounty, its unmeasured space. It is a touching fact that at the end of his life, at Elberon, the eyes of the dying President rested lovingly, longingly on the sea. Mr. Blaine suggests, in his eulogy, that then his friend "heard the great

waves breaking on the farther shore and felt upon his wasted brow the breath of the eternal morning."

Thomas Marshall, of Kentucky, a man of genius and power, expressed his desire to be buried in an open field and not in a crowded cemetery. "I have been crowded all my life," he said; "give me room for my grave." If one who has led a life of intense activity and great prominence feels this sense of limitation, is it strange that others are dissatisfied, whose ordinary lives are best symbolized by "one raindrop falling on moor, or meadow, or mountain, one flake of snow melting into the immeasurable deep"?

I have heard a young lawyer say, "When I was in college I had great ambitions. I planned to make myself an authority on international law, but now that I am out I am compelled to try mean little cases before mean little juries." He had not found the large place he sought. The youth who would be a painter must be a clerk, and the man with an artist's soul is selling tea and coffee. Longfellow tells us of one "whom nature made a poet but whom destiny made a schoolmaster." We cannot map out our orbit as we would. We crave largeness. Our faculties seem fitted for a greater sphere than that in which we move. Literature is full of the expression of this fact. "Songs of Unrest" would fill volumes. Who of us busy daily with little vexatious problems would not prefer to deal with great ones? Who of us fighting battles daily which only God can

see, would not prefer to fight an epoch-making battle? It is the insignificance of our lives that frets us. So, whatever enlarges life in any right direction is a benefaction.

Blessed is imagination, which expands the walls and lifts the low roof of life, and fills it with dreams of what might have been and of what may be. Blessed is travel, for it enlarges the horizon of the traveler if he be a close observer. It is a distinct step in one's mental development when he first acquaints himself with the language and customs of another country than his own. It is an old saying, "A man is as many men as he can speak languages." I know a German shoemaker who speaks nine languages, and he has acquired them by traveling through foreign lands. He goes abroad every year or two, tramps through the country he visits, lives the life of the people, and then comes back to his little shop to cobble and to live over in memory the scenes of his now numerous pilgrimages. Blessed is literature, for it broadens life. To most of us time to travel is denied. But books are not denied us,—books of travel, of history, of science, of fiction. A late writer advises us to read that fiction which portrays life as different as possible from our own. We hardly need that counsel. A certain instinct guides us in that direction. Dissatisfaction with the limitations of our lives impels us to read stories of soldiers and knights and heroes and heroic deeds. Far-off ages and far-off civilizations attract us. We broaden our lives by chang-

ing our view-point. Blessed is everything that tends to widen our sympathies and give us the consciousness of new relations. Blessed is the religion that takes us out of ourselves, makes us superior to our limitations, creates a new world for us. Supremely blessed is the Gospel of Jesus Christ, for of all religions that the world has seen, it offers its disciples the most abundant life.

The distinctive glory of Christianity is its expansive spirit. The keynote of it is the greatest possible development of the individual. It aims to make every man a king, every heart the throne of the Eternal, every life a consecrated temple. "The humblest life that lives may be Divine." It is a great undertaking, and it is unique in Christianity. Confucius never taught it. There is nothing in Confucianism to lead the individual soul to greatness. Prudential maxims and conventional morality may mean a better machine, but they do not increase his spiritual resources. Buddha taught the extinguishment of the individual. Epictetus taught the suppression of emotion, the denial of desire. Christ's doctrine is: Diminish nothing that is right; repress nothing that may be turned to good; do not diminish your interests, but multiply them; live the largest possible life; conquer your sorrows by making the sorrows of others your care; control your desires by giving them a new direction; extend life on every side. Is not this the Master's teaching? Is it not the uniform testimony of experience that Christian discipleship leads every faithful soul into

a large place? It is sin that narrows life, clips the wings with which the spirit would soar to lofty heights. Hence the conquest of sin by grace is like the liberation of a slave. Fetters fall off. Iron doors and brazen gates are torn asunder, and the captive moves out into God's universe to learn how life enlarges with each new step in grace.

There is a song which says,—

> "Could we but stand where Moses stood
> And view the landscape o'er."

Why, we can stand there; we do stand there! Our view-point is at the side of Jesus Christ. We have His perspective. We see things as He sees them. So things are not what they seem. Life and death, time and duty, sorrow and pain are transfigured, and history sweeps on towards that "far-off Divine event" when "all things shall be made new." Christ wants us to see, to hear, to think, to feel, to act, in view of infinite relations. He wants us to know that selfishness turns life into a squirrel cage; that envy, greed, falsehood, cruelty, base appetites, imprison men, make life small, and that the spirit of holiness extends all the boundaries of the inner man. Remember this; —for the idea prevails among some that Christianity limits life, except in the direction of the future. The fact is there is nothing else that so expands it. Not imagination, not travel, not literature, not all other things combined. God never calls us to impoverishment or isolation, but always

to enrichment and fellowship with the spirits of just men made perfect.

Christ was always calling men,—Philip, Nathanael, the rich young ruler, Zaccheus, Bartimeus, Lazarus, Nicodemus. Did any one of them follow Him and fail to find the meaning of abundant life? Did any one of them turn back who did not turn away from glory and honor and immortality? Years ago I knew a life that was transformed and led into a large place and made fruitful in abundant measure, and the memory of it lingers in my mind like a benediction. A common ploughboy heard somewhere of the Great Teacher, who made peasants and fishermen His disciples and let them share His kingly thoughts. As he walked behind the plough, he said to himself, "I would like to live a larger life; I would like to feel the uplift of great ideas. If the Teacher will take me I will learn of Him." From that hour he was a scholar in the school of Christ. He found the Master meek and lowly of heart and not at all like some teachers, who have no time to spend with beginners. Almost before he knew it the boy began to think differently of nature, of people, of all God's creatures. He found himself growing more patient and humane, more studious and reverent, richer in affection and keener in his interest in everything that concerned the welfare of the world. There was no sudden spasm of emotion, but a gradual breaking away from old conditions, a gradual ascension Godward. He thought of that Young Man who suffered Himself

to be baptized that He might leave nothing of righteousness unfulfilled, and he was baptized. He thought of another, who said, "I am debtor both to the Greeks and to the Barbarians," and he said, "I, too, am a debtor to the world." So he began to converse with people about the sweet reasonableness of Christianity. He had a word for other plough-boys, and a whole community began to feel the impulse of his words and work. He never entered the ministry, but his life was a continual ministry. From the farm he went into the halls of the legislature of his state, and from there to the governorship, and from there the God Who spoke to him as he followed the plough, called him to pass "through the gates into the city." Such a life was that of the late Governor Mount, of Indiana, upon whose tomb may well be written,—"He led me forth also into a large place."

That is what God wants to do for all of us. We cannot be so ambitious for ourselves as He is for us. Not that He makes all His servants leaders in the state, but He makes us princes of a royal line, companions of apostles, comrades of the saints, followers in the kingly train of the conquering Christ.

XII

THE SAVING FEW

"He who lives in the faith of Jesus Christ lives in the freest action of his mental powers, and sees before him and makes himself a part of the large world into which man shall enter, in which he has perfect liberty, and can exercise his powers as he could never have exercised them without. . . . It is the truth that is to make us free, and the entrance of a man into that freedom is the largest freedom of every region of man's life."

(*Thought and Action.* Phillips Brooks.)

"Life is a mission. Every other definition is false, and leads all who accept it astray. Religion, science, philosophy, though still at variance upon many points, all agree in this, that every existence is an aim."

(*Life and Writings.* Mazzini.)

"We live by Admiration, Hope and Love;
And, even as these are well and wisely fixed,
In dignity of being we ascend."

(*The Excursion.* Wordsworth.)

XII

THE SAVING FEW

"And there went with him a band of men, whose hearts God had touched." I Sam. x. 26.

The early history of Israel is full of peculiar interest. It is the record of the evolution of a people in the art of government. So long as a race is in its childhood, it is capable of no government, the objects of government,—the protection of life and property,—being secured by the action of the primal elements of force and fear. But as the race rises in power, as its interests become more complex, some form of organized government becomes necessary, and usually it is a very simple form, government by tribes or clans. Each tribe has its head, each clan its chief, and the nation is simply an aggregation of little governments.

As time goes on, the people of a given territory suffer from the aggression of an alien race, and then, for purposes of protection, the tribes federate and some one man of superior ability comes forward to lead them all. In the hour of victory over the army of the enemy, some one cries out, "Let us crown the man who led us to battle, and make him chief over all."

It is done, time goes by, the federation is cemented more and more closely, until there is something very like a kingdom, or an empire on a small scale. So the first of the Cæsars rose to prominence. So have almost all the great founders of nations risen to power.

There was a time when Israel, for four hundred years without a king, clamored for a different form of government. For four hundred years Israel had been peculiarly under the guidance of the King of kings. In times of danger, deliverance had come through some such providentially developed leader as Samson or Gideon or Deborah. Doubtless God would have been still the Great Defender, for God is never without some human agent to accomplish His will among men. In one age He chooses Cyrus, in another Charles Martel, in another Gustavus Adolphus, in another William of Orange, in another Oliver Cromwell, and in another Washington. God always has timber growing in His forest wherewith to make a vessel's keel or form a battering ram.

Now that Israel demands a king, God gives them one, and his name is Saul. The method of his choosing is here related. They are wise in trusting to a man of vision and prayer the selection of their monarch. They have great faith in Samuel's wisdom, for he has shown himself a faithful prophet and a fearless judge. So, to Samuel they looked for direction in matters of statecraft. The world has changed in many ways since the day when Israel committed the electorate to Samuel. In

many ways the world has improved, but in this respect we might make better progress by going backward and making the choice of our rulers a religious act. Do not understand me to advocate a suffrage limited by ecclesiastical standards. I would not commit to the priesthood the authority to crown and uncrown kings, to appoint magistrates and dismiss them. But it has come to pass in these days that the powers which select and elect the agents of civil government have seldom any conception of the sacredness of their function in public affairs. Too often caucuses and primaries are in the hands of irresponsible men. There are, indeed, exceptions; the scholar and the gentleman, the man of culture and character are beginning to see that the fault is theirs if incapable and corrupt men are elevated to office.

I fancy some critic is saying, "The choice of Saul was an unfortunate one, even though it was directed by a prophet." So it may seem. Saul miserably failed, and his sun went down in darkness. But remember, the Eye that sees all and the Mind that knows all saw and knew Saul, and He said, "Saul is the man." And he was an unspoiled, valiant, and devout man, a born leader, the very man, and the only man who could hold the forming nation in his hand. If Saul failed, if he made shipwreck of his life, if, as has been suggested, the cares of state weighed so heavily upon him that he fell a prey to melancholia bordering on madness, charge it not to Samuel, charge it not to God. His was the failure of a strong but wilful

man, who started right, but went astray. And if Saul failed to do all he should have done, if he disappointed Samuel, and disappointed God, sinking at last into the grave of irresolute and vanquished greatness, charge it not to the lack of good counsel, for it is written, "There went with him a band of men, whose hearts God had touched."

All that these words mean, we cannot say, but we may be sure of this,—they mean that Samuel's companions and counsellors at that time were patriots, sincere lovers of Israel, loyal friends, capable of strong attachment to each other and to their king; they were devout men who looked to God for guidance and for grace; and they were heroes. What a band of men they must have been! Not great men, it may be, and not saints, but good men, strong men, brave men, men of conviction and action. They were not many, only a little band, but the future of Saul depended upon his fidelity to them, and the hope of Israel was in the increase of their influence and their kind.

Blessed is the man who, when dark days come, has beside him a little band of men whose hearts God has touched. David had such a band to support him, as had also Elijah. Blessed is the nation which, in a crisis, in the presence of foes without or within, when the mob, unthinking as the swine of Gadara, is ready to rush down a steep place into the sea, has a little band of men whose hearts God has touched. Their common sense will hold the rest in awe. Their courage will defeat the conspiracies of the enemy. Their faith will

pierce the dark veil of the future, and speak of glorious things to come. A little band of God-touched hearts has been the sweetening leaven of society, the saving salt of the earth, the radiating light of the world.

If we remember this, it will help us to read history,—the human saviours of the race have always been a little band of men. How many were there in Gideon's band when the Midianites threatened the overthrow of Israel? Not half a modern regiment! They were only a handful of heroes who held the mountain pass against the host of Persians. And this is true of moral movements as well. The first disciples of Our Lord were only twelve. The Church, on the morning of the day of Pentecost, numbered but a hundred and a score. When the Dark Ages came, succeeded by the Middle Ages, in which the night grew gray with dawn, the hope of the pure Gospel was preserved in the breasts of a few whose knees would honor and whose tongues would confess no other name but Christ as the Church's head.

Count over the names of the reformers, Savonarola, Huss, Wyclif, Zwinglius, Sir Thomas More, Erasmus, Melancthon, and Luther,—and who are they? A little band of men whose hearts God had touched. God touched their hearts, and some spoke, and some wrote, and some translated, and all labored for the inalienable spiritual rights of men and the glory of God.

In the early years of the eighteenth century, in an English university there were a few students

whose hearts God had touched to hunger for holiness. They were from the humble walks of life, not a prince or duke or lord among them. At first they were but three. Presently the three grew to five, and the five to seventeen. They were spoken of contemptuously as the Holy Club, Bible Moths, the Godly Club, Supererogation Men. Sometimes they were dignified with the name Enthusiasts and Reformers, but the name by which they will be best remembered is Methodists.

A hundred years ago, in Williams College, there was a little band of men whose hearts God had touched. They met in the friendly shelter of a haystack, and held a prayer meeting, in which they consecrated themselves to the work of evangelizing the heathen world. There were five in that band, but out of it grew a similar band at Andover, in which was Adoniram Judson, the great apostle to Burma. One of them died on the coast of Africa. Two of them died of cholera, and their heroic dust mingles with the soil of India. Another also died near where the Pearl Mosque glistens in the sunshine of Agra. Judson was buried at sea. Great names are these,—Mills, Hall, Newell, Richards, Judson.

In 1854 there met in a dingy room in London a little band of men whose hearts God had touched. They were clerks and tradesmen, and they knew the barren life of clerks in London stores. So they organized a society for moral and religious improvement, which later developed into the Young Men's Christian Association. I happened to be present

when Sir George Williams, the leader of that little band, was knighted, and no worthier life has thus been honored within the memory of man.

About thirty years ago, in Kumamoto, Japan, in a boy's high school, there was a lad whose heart God had touched. He had found in Christ what he had not found in Buddha,—a living Saviour. At first he was afraid to confess his faith, but one day he confided his secret to a fellow-student, and his heart leaped for joy when he found a sympathetic response. Their joy overflowed, and touched the lives of others. Inquirers increased, and the number of Christians multiplied until there were forty in that school; when they made public their confession, it resulted in the breaking up of the school, but the dispersion of the young disciples only disseminated more widely the new faith, and some of that little band are among the leaders of the Christian Church in Japan to-day.

Some such band of God-touched hearts is at the genesis of every important moral and religious reform of the ages. The unit of power in every case is a single life, a single heart touched to see the world as the subject of redemption. The single life at Oxford was Wesley, at Williams College was Samuel Mills, at London was George Williams, at Kumamoto a lad who had heard of the New Testament as containing the secret of the beautiful life. The history of every significant movement having for its purpose the uplift of the race must be recorded thus: "God touched the heart of one man; he attracted to him a second, and they drew

around them others, and so the holy fire burned and the sacred influence spread from heart to heart." A very suggestive saying is this, "whose hearts God had touched." It means He had touched the key of all motive, determination and conduct; touched their lips to speak, their minds to think, their wills to act; touched their eyes, giving them new power to see things in their right relations, new correlations, and a new unity; touched their hands, strengthening them to war a good warfare; touched their feet, armoring them to walk strange and hard highways of duty. When God touches a man's heart, He makes a new man of him; gives him no new faculties, but turns all the old ones to new use. He gives him new light on life's problems, new hope for himself and for the race, new life moving in larger circles around an eternal and immovable center, that center the very personality of Jesus Christ.

I have a friend who sometimes tells, in speaking of the missionary movement, in which our progress sometimes seems so slow, of a conversation he once had with an English gardener on a great estate. My friend saw a strange, uncomely plant, upon which the gardener seemed to bestow extraordinary care. "What is it?" he inquired. The gardener answered, "It is a century plant. My father cared for it forty years; I have cared for it almost as long, and my son, who is my assistant, will care for it after I am gone. My father never saw it bloom, and I shall never see it bloom, but my children and my children's children shall see it bloom, and then they will think of my father

and of me." Have you ever thought of the Kingdom of God as something like that? It is a great plant having its root in the soil of ages, watered by the tears of the saints, enriched by the blood of the martyrs, fostered by the care of apostles, and still putting forth strong stalks and green leaves. The blossom is yet to come. But when Christianity blossoms, not the perfume of the Rose of Sharon or of the Lily of the Valley shall be so sweet, and the glory of it shall be shared by all whose hearts God ever touched to give their love and their labor to its cultivation.

XIII

SUCCESS AND FAILURE

"I cannot express it more nobly than in good old Professor Simpson's words as a year ago he laid down his chair in the medical school of the University of Edinburgh and the deanship of the medical faculty, and presented the graduating class of the year for their degrees. 'It may chance,' said he, 'that some July day far down the century, when I have long been in the ether, one or other of you will talk with child or grandchild of the years when the century was young. Along its unforgotten scenes there will arise before your mind the memory of the day when at last you burst the chrysalis shell of pupilage to lift free wings into the azure. You will recall the unusual concurrence of the simultaneous leave-taking of the university, by the graduates and their promoter. "We came away," you will say to the child, "a goodly company all together through the gateway that leads to the rosy dawn. He passed out all alone through the door that looks to the sunset and the evening star. He was an old man like me," I forehear you say, "not in himself a great man. He had been the friend of great men and came out of a great time in the nineteenth century when there was mid-sea and the mighty things, and it looked to the men of his generation as if old things had passed away and a new world begun. And he told us that the great lesson he had learned on his way through life was the same that the disciple who leaned on Jesus' breast at supper taught to the fathers, the young men, and the little children of his time, when he said, 'The world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever.' " ' "

(*The Marks of a Man.* Robert Elliott Speer. p. 118.)

XIII

SUCCESS AND FAILURE

"This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth; but thou shalt meditate therein day and night, that thou mayest observe to do according to all that is written therein: for then thou shalt make thy way prosperous, and then thou shalt have good success." Josh. i. 8.

The world needs a revised terminology. There is such a thing as the immoral use of words. One of the signs of a degenerate age is the degeneration of its vocabulary. It is as great an offense to truth to apply a good name to a bad thing as to apply a bad name to a good thing. In one of the visions of Isaiah, he sees the redeemed world, the golden age, and marks as one of its great features, a corrected nomenclature. "The vile person shall be no more called liberal, nor the churl said to be bountiful." Is it not easy to see that to call one liberal who is not liberal is to wrong all truly liberal souls, and to call one bountiful who is not bountiful, is unjust to all truly bountiful souls? Is it not an offense to all brave men to call a coward brave? Do we not ruinously discount gentleness when we apply the term to one who is not a gentleman? What an offense to friendship to speak of one as a friend who is merely an acquaintance! Some one asked another, "Is

not such and such a person beautiful?" and the reply was, "No, not beautiful, but pretty." A vast difference between those words. A strutting little officer once said to Napoleon, "I am higher than you," and he replied, "Taller, not higher."

Ruskin speaks of the discriminating use of words as one of the tests of culture. Surely it should be a quality of the religious mind to call things by their right names, to avoid giving a good name to a bad act or a bad name to a good act. The Scriptures warn us: "Woe unto them that call evil good, and good evil; that put darkness for light, and light for darkness; that put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter!"

There is a word which occurs with great frequency in all our ordinary conversation and reading, concerning which there is much confusion. It is often applied to people and things that do not deserve it, and as often denied to people and things that do deserve it. It is the word "success," a great word as to the place it occupies in modern thought. It has been called "the modern god, Success," as if it were a thing adored by some, idolized, deified; as indeed it is. There are those who regard it as the highest good, the worthiest aim in life. There are those to whom the inexcusable offense is to fail. And it is, if we rightly define the word. To succeed is the *summum bonum*, if we do not misunderstand the word. Just here is the trouble. There is confusion as to the real meaning of success and failure. We overlook a fact intimated in this text, in the apparent tautology of the

phrase, "good success." It would appear that success is not always successful, and that failure does not always fail. We have been deceived by that popular sophism, "Nothing succeeds like success." Who first uttered that fallacy we have never taken the trouble to inquire. Certainly no wise man ever said it. Certainly no good man ever said it. And if he who invented the saying was neither wise nor good, the sooner we forget it the better,—the better for us, and the better for the world. The plain truth is that nothing succeeds like what the world sometimes brands a failure; and nothing fails so miserably, so totally, so fatally, as what the world sometimes calls success. The confusion arises from a double standard of success.

According to human judgment, they succeed who reach the end at which they aim. The rich merchant, the popular politician, the promoted captain, the famous orator, the victorious athlete,—these succeed, for they lay hold on the prize toward which they strove. Whether the prize is worth striving for is quite another consideration. Whether the gold was hot and heavy; whether the crown was tarnished; whether the wreath faded on the brow of the victor,—such questions we do not ask. What if the merchant builds his palace at the expense of his soul? What if the politician purchases his power by judicious silence? What if the captain ascends the throne of power over the ruin of hundreds of his peers? What if the orator lowers the tone of his gospel to tickle the itching ears of the curbstone mob? What if the runner or

wrestler, in his development of the animal, ignores the spiritual? All this is nothing,—they have succeeded!

But wait. There is the other standard, judged by which they alone succeed who have a worthy aim. In the one case the action is judged by reference to the end; in the other, by reference to the purpose, the motive, the aspiration. Surely this is a safe proposition: Anything succeeds in so far as it does what it was designed by its maker to do. An axe is a success if it cuts. A clock is a success if it keeps time. If the axe is not well tempered, if it loses its edge with the first stroke, it fails as an axe. It may yet be a good hammer, or, separated from its handle, it may serve as a paper weight, but it is a poor axe. And if the clock cannot be regulated; if it is unreliable; if we cannot trust it to tell us the hour and the minute, however beautiful it may be as an ornament, it has failed as a clock.

Let us apply this proposition to human life. What is life for? What did God intend to make when man walked out from His finished thought? The question is not, Can we acquire wealth? We can if we will to do it. The question is not, Can we reach the summit of yonder hill? We can if we will to do it. The question is, What did the Creative Power put us here to do? That is for us to discover, and that is for us to do. If He wants us to be builders, we will build. If He wants us to spin, we will spin. If God wants us to weave, we will weave. The bee will teach us to build, the

spider to spin, the worm to weave. If God wants us to be mere machines, we will reduce our lives to mechanical forces. But, if He wants us to make the utmost of our highest faculties, to cultivate patience, and courage, and self-denial, and reverence, and love, we must do that. And if we undertake to do that, we shall find our teacher in a Man Who lived a perfect life, and Whose life has been recorded for us that we might not fail to make our lives Divine.

The Holy Scriptures make plain the purpose of man's creation. We are not left in ignorance as to our Maker's design. We are to do His will, to incarnate His spirit, to follow Jesus Christ, to have the mind that was in Christ,—that is, to get His view of things, His view of time and eternity, of pleasure and duty, of failure and success. If we do this, if we faithfully try to do this, we succeed. If we do not try to do this, we fail. We may succeed as builders, spinners, weavers, machines, and fail as souls, as sons of God. This is the Biblical idea, this the Divine standard of judgment: "That thou mayest observe to do according to all that is written therein." But how difficult to adopt this view! How many standards of judgment are set up in opposition to it! The popular notion of success in China is scholarship; in India, voluntary suffering; in Korea, extreme old age; in Egypt, it is honorable to be a beggar; in Turkey, success means a well-filled harem; in Spain, he is fortunate who has a name for valor. In America, our idea of success is composite. Whatever else it

excludes, it does not exclude money and the power money is supposed to secure its possessor; it does not exclude lavish expenditure, social prestige, the ability to impress our neighbors with our superiority by the maintenance of an elaborate establishment. How largely money enters into our standard of success is evident from such stock phrases as "poor but respectable," "poor but honest," "the short and simple annals of the poor." Is it not time to revise this part of our social creed? Is there not some reason to accustom ourselves to phrases of another kind, such as, "rich but respectable," "born of rich but honest parents"? We must not forget that the annals of the poor are neither short nor simple, but contain both names and deeds without which humanity would be poor indeed.

Whatever standard of success we adopt, it were well for us to remember this, that, measured by the worldly standard, most men fall short of success. Great wealth can be attained by comparatively few. Only a small percentage of all who engage in commerce achieve distinguished success. The average is not high. In the nature of the case, very few reach the highest honors in politics, and the exaltation of one means the humiliation of another. In war, one man is remembered, and a million are forgotten. He was a man of world-wide fame, who, having reached the zenith of his ambition, wrote, "I am on the height, but it is cold and lonely here." He had been a President of this Republic—had retired but two days before, who sat in the house of a

friend in Washington, and said, "Two days ago I had many friends; to-day I have but few. I am nobody. So fades the dream!"

Moreover, not only do few succeed, judged by purely human standards, but some of those who do succeed, fail in the highest sense. There are vanquished victors, self-defeated conquerors. There are poor rich men, weak strong men, foolish wise men. Whatever else one may gain, there are some things which, if he loses, render him unfortunate indeed. Let a man gain all the world has for him,—power, fame, money, what is it all worth to him if he has lost brightness of honor, ease of conscience, treasures of love, dignity of self-respect, the dominion of the spirit, and the approval of God? I do not say that all who have gained those things have lost these, but some have.

On the other hand, there are those who have been accounted failures who, in the light of clearer judgment, have succeeded. There is the possibility that what looks like failure now may succeed in time. Fifty years ago, the world looked at John Brown and called him a failure. But he did all that he started out to do, and more. It was no mere caprice of circumstance, it was one of the vindications of history, that the song our soldiers sang, as they entered Richmond at the end of the war, was

> "John Brown's body lies moldering in the grave,
> But his soul goes marching on."

William Tyndale's life looked like a failure,—exiled from England, strangled to death at Vilvorden,

praying with his last breath, "Lord, open the King of England's eyes." But Tyndale's prayer was answered. Only a little later Henry VIII defied the Pope, and Tyndale's version of the Bible passed on its way to the throne of power. There was a time when the life and ministry of Jesus of Nazareth looked like a failure. He had come to the end, with the religious authorities against Him, and with Imperial Rome against Him. Penniless as any pauper, homeless as any outcast, friendless, save for the faltering friendship of a group of men as poor as himself, He died a malefactor's death between two thieves. So ends His ministry! So vanishes His vision of a kingdom! Ends? Vanishes? Wait. Wait until the third day. There is an open tomb in Joseph's garden, and hope revives in the hearts of the humble, and Jesus Christ begins His age-long and world-wide victory. So, what appears failure may be success.

There is always the possibility that defeat may be the stepping-stone to victory. If failure reveals to us our weakness, and leads to firm resolve; if defeat humiliates us, and gives us a better conception of our proper place, cures us of conceit; if the wreck of cherished hopes impels us to build statelier mansions for our souls, then this may be the way to ultimate strength and power. Phillips Brooks failed as a teacher in the Boys' Latin School in Boston, and retired from the profession of teaching, under a shadow, his heart heavy, his future dark. Then he was led into the ministry, and the world has reason to rejoice that he failed as a

schoolmaster. Dr. Lorenz, who, by a process of bloodless surgery, reduces congenital dislocation of the hip-joint, was a poor boy, but he had a good mother and a great ambition. One day he found a glove on the street. His mother said, "My boy, you will have to work hard to get the other glove." He did work hard, and before he was forty, he was Assistant Professor of Surgery in the University of Vienna. There was soon to be a vacancy in the professorship, and he had reason to expect the appointment. Suddenly he developed a stubborn skin disease. His hands became so sensitive he could not put them into even the weakest aseptic solution. His surgical career was at an end. "The other glove" seemed unattainable. He left Vienna temporarily, disconsolate, a failure. But in Italy he met a friend who suggested that he specialize in dry surgery. He had not seriously thought of that before. It opened a new career before him, and students of medicine who hear me well know what a splendid career it has been. He had to fail before he began to succeed.

There is a still more comforting phase of this subject. There are those out of whose failure there issues no such happy sequel as that to which I have just adverted. There are those who never get "the other glove." There is this comfort for them. Emerson says, "The essence of greatness is the perception that virtue is enough." If this be true,—and it is true—then the essence of success is the perception that to deserve to succeed is to succeed in the eyes of the Great Taskmaster. Take the case of

two students who compete for an honor in a college class. One of them is brilliant and quick to learn. He acquires knowledge without laborious effort. The other is solid, slow in his mental processes, acquires knowledge painfully. He must work hard to do what the other does with ease. At the end of the term, the brilliant student is awarded the prize. Has the other failed? Far from it. The instructor knows that the prize-winner is not the close student. If the prize represents application, industry, studious habits, then the loser deserves it. But, after all, the reward of scholarship is not a gold medal, or an honorable mention. Scholarship is its own reward.

No earthly court or committee is competent to say in any case whether the successful man deserves to succeed. There are so many factors of which we have no knowledge. Doubtless, the real victor is often the apparently defeated contestant. Doubtless, there are those whom we call moral failures who have struggled more heroically for victory over self and sin than some others who are called saints. The poet is right who intimates that there may be more reverence in some people's honest doubts than in some other people's thoughtless prayers. We fall back forever upon this assurance, "The Lord knoweth them that are His." He knows how fierce has been the battle, and how faithful the spirit of the man who fails. He knows the fidelity of His servants who fight unseen battles, and perhaps never taste the sweets of victory. He knows the struggle of the

conquered, and forever and forever He holds out His hand to the soul in the midst of stress and storm, saying, "Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life."

It is the faithful, not the clever; the faithful, not the brilliant; the faithful, not the successful, who succeed. We are not commanded to keep up with the procession. We are commanded not to depart from "this book of the law." We are commanded to "meditate therein day and night." We are commanded to keep step with our Leader, —and when the march is long and the load heavy He tarries for us. There was one, long ago, who said at the close of his long and burdened life, the end of which, apparently, was an unrelieved tragedy, "I have fought a good fight . . . I have kept the faith." That is what changes the whole case. Paul's life was not a tragedy. It was an epic, magnificent and beautiful. No man who fights a good fight ever fails. No man who keeps the faith throws his life away. Earth may take that life and break it, but God takes up the fragments, and lo! in His hands they are a perfect whole.

XIV

NOT BY BREAD ALONE

"Surely this is a mystery. But just as surely it is a reality. Inwardly, men and women are being renewed day by day, while outwardly, men and women are perishing. Souls are being born again continually, not by the will of the flesh nor by the will of man, but by the Word of the Lord, which liveth and abideth for ever—which Word is Christ. Men are living by bread, but not by bread alone. Underneath the bounties which supply their temporal needs they are touching the hand which feeds their spiritual longings. In the wilderness they are finding heavenly manna. Living waters flow from the riven rocks of time and sense. Through the withering and fading leaves of mortality, as in a secret and perpetual springtide, their souls are pierced and quickened with

"'Bright shoots of everlastingness.'

"Of this life Christ is the giver and the source. Christ is the Bread of God Which cometh down from heaven and giveth life unto the world. Christ is the living vine, and through Him flows every drop of immortality that renews the human branches and makes them glad with blossoms and fertile in everlasting fruits."

(*The Open Door.* Henry Van Dyke. p. 154.)

XIV

NOT BY BREAD ALONE

"It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone."
Matt. iv. 4.

We should never read the fourth chapter of Matthew without reading, in connection with it, the fourth chapter of Hebrews. Matthew records the threefold temptation of Jesus. The author of the Epistle to the Hebrews declares, "We have a High Priest Who is touched with the feeling of our infirmities and was in all points tempted as we are." I have heard a student say, "Jesus was never tempted as I am." I have heard a business man say, "Jesus was never tempted as I am." I have heard an artist say, "Jesus was never tempted as I am." But He was, He was tempted as all of us are tempted, since He was tempted in all points. His temptations were thoroughly representative. His first temptation was to the appetite, the senses; his second was to the intellect, an appeal to the pride; His third, was to the will, an appeal to the desire for power, ambition, that "last infirmity of noble minds." So the three temptations covered the whole scope of life, the entire compass of character. "In all points." Where are the student's temptations? In the realm of intellect? Jesus

was tempted there. Where are the business man's temptations? In the realm of will? He was tempted there. Where are the artist's temptations? In the realm of sensibility? He was tempted there. In this, as in every other respect essential to humanity, Jesus is the representative Man, the second Adam of a new-born, nobler race.

Abraham Lincoln is universally beloved in memory because he had within him, in larger measure than any other man of modern times, the things that are common to us all. This is a paradox,—that the very commonness of the man is the thing that makes him uncommon! Can a man be so like us all that he is above us all? Yes. And that is one feature of the unique distinctiveness of Jesus. He lived a life so full of toil and trial, so full of knowledge and experience, that though He is bound to us all as our universal Brother, yet He is "the Sovereign Seer of Time." A modern poet sings:

"Although I know Thee as the Son of God
Anointed,
And hail Thee Prophet, Priest, and King
Appointed,
Still when I need Thee, Thou art nearest,
And when I trust Thee, Thou art dearest,
As Son of Man.

"And so I call Thee by the title
That I love,
And by the name that speaks most comfort
From above;
Redeemer, Counsellor, Immanuel,—
As these I know Thee not so well
As Son of Man."

But not the character of His temptation interests us as does the method of His conquest. "It is written," He says. In the knowledge of what has been written, He has wherewith to answer His adversary. And in the knowledge of what has been written we have a source of strength the extent and value of which is often unsuspected.

Matthew Arnold defines culture as the knowledge of the best that has been thought and said in the world. That knowledge is preserved in books: the jurisprudence of Hammurabi and of Moses, of Lycurgus and Justinian; the poetry of Isaiah and Homer, of Virgil and Dante, of Burns and Browning; the dramas of Æschylus and Shakspere; the meditations of Marcus Aurelius and Epictetus; the intimate journals of Pascal and Amiel; the visions of "Piers Plowman" and John Bunyan; the orations of Demosthenes and Cicero, of Burke and Webster; the civic idealism of Plato and Sir Thomas More, of John Locke and Adam Smith; the gentle humor of Charles Lamb; the scholarly æstheticism of Ruskin; the æsthetic democracy of William Morris; the sermons of Robert Hall and John Wesley. The greatest thoughts of the world's greatest thinkers are on these library shelves. To know what is written is culture, and culture is a large part of what the old Greek philosopher called "ampleness of soul." Better a little house with an ample soul than an ample house with no horizon. The Arab, it is said, will not destroy the least floating fragment of print lest it contain the Divine name or a sentence

from one of the sacred books. What is written is holy in his sight.

What is the Bible? It is the record of God's revelation to His children. It is the laboratory notebook of the greatest religious geniuses the human race has thus far produced. History, biography, philosophy, ethics, poetry, literature, these are all here. For what? For whom? "These are written, that YE might believe . . . and that believing ye might have LIFE through His name." I stood beside a critic in an art gallery recently, and heard him say of a canvas, "That picture is not true to life." Similarly we characterize certain novels, and condemn them, as not true to life. Here are two pictures. One is a photograph, and the other a painting. Superficially, the photograph is true to life. It was made by machinery. A lens, unconscious and insentient, took in the view of things just as they were at the moment the shutter snapped. But the painter sat and waited till a cloud obscured the sun, or till a mist hung over the valley, and he caught the subdued glow in the sky, the color of the rocks, the very atmosphere of the place, the peace that overspread it like the smile of God. He painted himself in it; he put his own mood into it, and so he was true to the life within. This illustrates the difference between the mechanical view of the universe and the spiritual view. "Man shall not live by bread alone."

By what does man live if not by bread? "By every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of

God." Jesus here quotes from the Book of Deuteronomy, in which God speaks to Moses, and Moses to the people shortly before his death. How have they lived these forty years in the wilderness? Their hunger has been fed, and their thirst has been assuaged, but they have had a life which has been nourished by other things than by manna from heaven and water from the smitten rock. Jehovah said to them, "Remember all the way you have been led." Then they remembered Egypt, her slime pits and brick kilns; Egypt, and the tombs of her tyrant kings and the temples of her beast-worship; Egypt, and the Nile running red like a bleeding vein laid open on the bare brown breast of the desert; Egypt, and sudden darkness; Egypt, and the death angel marking with his shadow the threshold of every home from palace to hut; Egypt, and the sprinkled blood of the passover; Egypt, and the Exodus, the crossing of the sea, the mountain and its law; Marah and its sweetening branch in the bitter pool; Meribah and the gushing flood; Elim and its palms; the brazen serpent; the death of Aaron on Mount Hor,—all this they remembered and knew that their God had trained, subdued, controlled, organized, and compacted them into a nation. They had come out of Egypt an ungoverned mob; they are slowly taking the shape of a self-governing people. In the council of the elders there is the germ of future parliaments and senates. In their code of laws there is the germ of future constitutions and statutes. They are learning to live by memory. History is

only the recorded memory of past events. It is not too much to say that we learn to live by history. We shape our future by the lessons of experience. The voice of the past is the voice of the Eternal, warning, entreating, admonishing, encouraging, summoning us to "the trimmed lamp and the girded loin." Is not this the message of Isaiah,—"Thine ears shall hear a word behind thee, saying, This is the way, walk ye in it, when ye turn to the right hand, and when ye turn to the left"?

If we live by memory, if we learn from history, as we do, still more do we live and learn by our own deepest experiences. Hezekiah puts it into words of beauty and power, when, after his recovery from illness, and the merciful lengthening of his life, he prays, "O Lord, by these things men live, and in all these things is the life of my spirit." By what things? What has secured the renewal of his spiritual life? The lengthening of his years was but a little thing. The deepening of his life was everything. He had been face to face with death, and he was not afraid, for he had walked before the Lord, "in truth and with a perfect heart." But he was ashamed to die. He had not finished his work. Sennacherib's army had been snuffed out like a candle, and Jerusalem had peace. But after peace-bells ring there are perils more subtle and more deadly than alien armies. After Appomattox came Reconstruction, and the shame is on us yet. Hezekiah had yet a man's work to do, and his sun was going down at noon. His prayer

was not the frenzied cry of an epicure, loath to leave his purple and his banquet table, but of a hero who wants to be in the battle for God in the thick of the fight.

I know a man who occupies a great pulpit in the West who, ten years ago, stood where Hezekiah stood, at what seemed his journey's end. The shadow on the dial moved back for this modern prophet, and when he next stood before the people, he said: "I have had my vision of Christ. Others may have clearer vision of Him, but this is mine. I will preach only what I know. I will preach only what I know is supremely important. I will preach only what I have fallen down upon and found safe and able to bear me up. I will preach only what I found true when lately I went up to the gate of Otherwhere." Ah, it is by such things men live. It is by such things life takes on new and Divine significance.

The greatest specialist in pulmonary tuberculosis in America is himself a sufferer from the disease he has done so much to conquer in others. Two of his children have died from it. I saw him once after he had sat for hours in his consulting room, examining patients. He was weary. He said: "I have just seen a girl who was sure she was incurably sick, and there is nothing the matter with her. I had to tell another who was sure she had only 'a trifling cold' that she is doomed to die." Then, shuddering, and with tears in his eyes, he leaned his head on his desk, and cried,

"O God! O God!" That man will come down from the mountains for a few days, to meet people who cannot go to him, or to speak before medical societies, and tuberculosis congresses, and then hurry back with shortened breath, the unvanishing shadow ever at his side. Unconquerable of will and tender of heart, it is by such things he lives, —by suffering, and courage, and sympathy. But hear him speak of the world-wide campaign of education in the prevention of disease, and you will see he lives also by hope.

It was in April, 1865. Grant was drawing his lines about Lee to hold him in relentless grasp. Grant was ill. He had eaten nothing for hours, and little for days. His face was ashen, his features pinched, and he looked like an old man. Then there approached his headquarters a Confederate officer, on horseback, and under escort, and handed him a note from Lee indicating willingness to surrender. One of Grant's staff said, "I never saw such a transformation. The general's eyes took on brightness, and color came to his cheeks. He sent Lee his answer, and walked away with the buoyancy of a youth." Hope had given him new life. An Apostle says, "We are saved by hope." That is because hope is only another aspect of faith. Hope is faith foreseeing the keeping of God's Word. It is faith leaning on God's Word. It is faith trusting in the dark. We do not say too much when we say that it is by faith we live. "The just shall live by faith." Faiths may perish, but faith does not.

"There is no unbelief;
Whoever plants a seed beneath the sod,
And waits to see it push away the clod,
He trusts in God.

"Whoever says, 'The clouds are in the sky,
Be patient, heart, light breaketh by and by,'
Trusts the Most High.

"Whoever sees, 'neath winter's wealth of snow,
The silent harvest of the future grow,
God's power must know.

"Whoever says, 'To-morrow,' 'The Unknown,'
'The Future,' trusts the Power alone
He dares disown."

In Jesus' mind, life had a double meaning. In His speech, bread had a double meaning. "My meat is to do the will of Him that sent Me." "I have meat to eat that ye know not of." It is not difficult to judge where the Apostle John learned the lesson of "hidden manna" which they must feed upon who overcome. Material bread feeds the material body, but there is another body, another life. To awaken us to the reality of that other life was the mission of the Master among men. "It is not that which entereth into the body that defileth it." Our lives are like temples slowly building through the days. Our bodies are the scaffolding. It matters little what composes the scaffolding, just so it holds together till the temple is built. What goes into the construction of the temple is of infinite importance. Its materials must be abiding. It demands strength and beauty. There are pillars and "lily work" at the top. We

live by the things that build us up invisibly,—by memory and hope; by experience and aspiration; by prayer and faith; by worship and service; by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God; thus and only thus are we "builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit."

"Said the corn to the lilies,
'Come not near my feet,—
You are only lilies,
Neither corn nor wheat;
Can one earn a living
Just by being sweet?'

"Answered the lilies
Neither Yea nor Nay,
But they looked the fairer
All the livelong day,
And, at length, the Master
Chanced to come that way.

"While the tired disciples
Waited at His feet,
And the proud corn rustled,
Bidding them to eat;
'Children,' said the Master,
'The Life is more than meat.'"

XV

THE PRACTICAL VALUE OF SENTIMENT

"It is pleasant to feel nobly—that is to say, to live above the lowlands of vulgarity. Manufacturing Americanism and Cæsarian Democracy tend equally to the multiplying of crowds, governed by the appetite, applauding charlatanism, bowing to the worship of Mammon and of pleasure, and adoring no other God than force. What poor samples of mankind they are who make up this growing majority! Oh, let us remain faithful to the altars of the ideal! . . . Materialistic naturalism has the wind in its sails, and a general moral deterioration is preparing. No matter, so long as the salt does not lose its savor, and so long as the friends of the higher life maintain the sacred fire. The wood itself may choke the flame, but if the flame persists, the fire will only be the more splendid in the end."

"The ideal, after all, is truer than the real: for the ideal is the eternal element in perishable things: it is their type, their sum, their *raison d'être*, their formula in the Book of the Creator, and therefore at once the most exact and the most condensed expression of them."

(*Amiel's Journal.* [Mrs. Humphrey Ward's Translation.] Vol. I. pp. 227, 228, 234.)

XV

THE PRACTICAL VALUE OF SENTIMENT

"And they said one to another, Behold, this dreamer cometh."
Gen. xxxvii. 19.

Hans Christian Andersen's story, "The Ugly Duckling," is a classic. The Ugly Duckling was no duckling at all, but a swan, and in the eyes of the ducklings, an awkward, unlovely, unfriendly bird. Not until the swans came did the ugly duckling take its proper place and claim its heritage of beauty and of grace.

Joseph was the ugly duckling of Jacob's brood. He was not like his brothers. They were rude, gross, savage. He was gentle, sentimental, poetic. They were herdsmen, hunters, fighters, tillers of the soil, men of affairs. He was a dreamer, a mystic. It is not strange he was an alien and stranger to them. It is not strange they were hostile to him. It was the antipathy of opposites.

His fellow-citizens hated Aristides because he was just and they were not. Joseph's brethren hated him because he was their dissimilar, their superior, and because, being what he was, he was his father's favorite. Jealousy was at the root of their hatred. He had committed the unpardon-

able sin in their eyes,—the deadly and unpardonable sin of being unlike them.

Jealousy is at the root of a great many kinds of hatred,—race hatred, and class hatred. The poor unbalanced brain that accomplished the assassination of President McKinley was conscious only of an unreasoning class jealousy. He said, "I did not think it was right that one man should have so much service," meaning honor, I presume. Joseph's brethren did not think it right that he should have the preëminence. The coat of brilliant colors was nothing in itself, but whenever they saw it, it seemed to speak of all the favoritism with which their superior brother had been treated. "Superior?" Had they not equally good claims to honor? Were they not also Jacob's sons? Did they not labor for the common welfare of the family and clan? So, doubtless, they thought, and so, doubtless, they talked, and the poison of jealousy rankled in their hearts until they were ready for any crime in the calendar. Do we not know how many a life has been blasted, and how many a household has been ruined, by that unlovely thing, jealousy? Given jealousy, and many things may follow,—self-love, cruelty, violence, death. But, though the end may not be violence, the end is always misery and tears.

In the case of Joseph's brethren, there was not only contempt for the dissimilar, but contempt for the familiar. Many a genius, many a sage, many a saint, has been despised by those who were nearest to him. It is the old story of the un-

honored prophet in his own land. We have all heard of "the illusion of the near." Are we not prone to the undervaluation of the near? At the unveiling of a monument to a great literary man, some one remarked to his widow, who was present, "You must feel very proud to have been the wife of such a man." She replied, "Yes, I am, but there were times when he was a dreadful nuisance about the house!" That is nothing less than the tragedy of the familiar.

The words of the brothers as the lad Joseph approaches, "Behold, here comes this dreamer," suggest to me a far more general thought than personal hatred or jealousy. They suggest the scorn of a practical world for the merely sentimental. It may not amount to scorn. It may be mere neglect, but the mental attitude is that which says of the artist, the nature-lover, the poet, the mystic, "Here comes that dreamer." Popular indifference to art is one of the outward signs of a lack of inward grace. There are not wanting some signs that we, in America, are awakening to a sense of our needs in this direction, but the lamentable ignorance of the average man as to the standards of value in art condemns us for our deficiency in the recognition of the value of sentiment. It does make a difference whether a church looks like a temple or a warehouse. It does make a difference whether our homes are beautiful or hideous. It does make a difference whether we cover our walls with gaudy chromos and showy crayons, or with artistic engravings, photographs

of the masters, (which, by the way are no more expensive than the colors that shriek at us). It does make a difference whether the streets of a city are disfigured by glaring advertisements and indecent theatrical posters. Blessed are the civic improvement agitators. "Here comes that dreamer," but the life of the city is sweeter and saner and finer because he has lived in it, and generations yet to come will rise up to honor his name.

Disregard of the ideal phases of nature is a part of this contempt for the sentimental. The modern world owes a great debt to John Ruskin for calling our attention not alone to the genuine in art, but to the sublime in nature. Read his prose poem on "Clouds," and then go out under the sunset skies and see the handiwork of the Infinite Artist on the immeasurable canvas of the heavens.

The Christian Church observes the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper with this in view,— to make God real to us, to give us a sense of His intimate nearness. Any symbol, any experience that gives us a sense of the Divine Presence, is sacramental. The study of Nature in some of her phases has that effect on some souls. There is a beautiful suggestion of this in Shakspere's "Merchant of Venice." Lorenzo says to Jessica:

> "Look how the floor of heaven
> Is thick inlaid with patines of pure gold:
> There's not the smallest orb which thou beholdest
> But in his motion like an angel sings
> Still choiring to the young-eyed cherubim."

The patine is the cover of the sacramental cup. Is there nothing sacramental to us in a starry night, in a rare landscape, in a virgin forest? If not, we have not learned to read. What says the psalmist? "The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament showeth His handywork." What John Ruskin has done, Dr. Van Dyke and Mr. Roberts are doing, and all such men to whom the world is under obligation for the vision of many a "little river," and the heart of many an "ancient wood." We have never seen Jesus as He was until we see what a nature-lover He was, how at home among the mountains and on the sea, what eyes He had to behold the heavenly meaning of every earthly scene.

Not only in popular indifference to art, and common disregard of the ideal phases of nature, does this contempt for the sentimental appear. At the worst, it expresses itself in the failure of many an otherwise sane and shrewd man to estimate the proper place of religion in the economy and government of life. Ask your busy, bustling, energetic man of affairs what the bank stands for, what the factory stands for, and he will tell you. He gives these their proper place in life. Neither does he underestimate the importance of educational and benevolent institutions. But if you ask him what the Church represents, he may reply, "Nothing but sentiment." It is the same old materialism,—"Here comes that dreamer."

Yet, if we inquire whence have come the influences which have made man's life and woman's

honor safe; whence the forces which have set a new value on manhood, protected the sanctity of the home, endowed us with the sovereign rights of citizenship; if we inquire the fertile source of the movement that makes for universal brotherhood and peace, there is but one answer. The most potent agent in the education and elevation of society, and in the amelioration of human conditions, has been "the faith of our fathers." By all the dreams of all the dreamers, by all the visions of all the prophets, by all the prayers of all the saints, and by all the tears of all the martyrs, the world has been purified and uplifted towards God. Jacob's vision of Shiloh; Daniel's vision of the world governed in righteousness; Ezekiel's vision of the river flowing from the altar of the House of God throughout the earth; Paul's vision of the man in Europe asking for help; Peter's vision of eliminated racial barriers, and John's vision of a heavenly city descending upon earth, are but parts of the perfect vision of the plan of God who made the world to be the dwelling place of a ransomed race.

No vision of David, or Isaiah, or Langland, or Bunyan ever gave the man who had it and declared it the title that belongs to Jesus as the Supreme Idealist of the race. A skeptical socialist inquires, "But what did Jesus ever do?" He wrote no constitutions, issued no Emancipation Proclamations, signed no Magna Charta, but He made it possible for other men to work out the freedom of mankind. He began it all by

emancipating the spirit, by making us conscious of world-citizenship, by laying upon us the dignity of God's children. So doing, He became the Supreme Idealist and as such rules the world. But He chooses to rule the world through us. Standing at His side, we have visions of world-conquest, not for ourselves but for the Kingdom He founded in the hearts of men.

It is no small thing to follow Jesus Christ. It is to inherit a world of sentiment, and a world of enterprise. It is ours not alone to dream, but to dream and do. Joseph was a dreamer, but he rose to the premiership of Egypt. Daniel was a dreamer, but he became president of the princes of Babylon. History is full of instances of men who have inhabited the great world of the ideal, and yet were not unfitted for contact with earthly problems. Michelangelo was not a mere dreamer. Gladstone was not a mere dreamer. Some one says of him, "He possessed two realms, one sentimental, the other practical, and from either he could withdraw himself into the other, and from each he emerged, stronger for the other." General "Chinese" Gordon was not a mere dreamer. He had time to cultivate sentiment, the noblest of all sentiments—friendship with God—and yet he was a warrior and the ruler of a great African empire.

We must, as workers together with God, as scholars in the school of Christ, cultivate the sentimental in the midst of the practical. The sentimental is practical. We must build our castles in the air before we know where to build them on the

earth. George Washington wrought out with his sword what Samuel Adams had already wrought out with his pen. Garibaldi and Victor Emmanuel were not the only liberators of Italy; there was Mazzini, who had dreamed of a free and unified Italy before them, and had started a hundred thousand young Italians to dreaming his dream until they were ready to respond to Garibaldi's call, when he said, "You that are in love with hardship and death, follow me."

The function of the dreamer is to hold up before us the ideal, to show us things as they should be. The scheme may appear impracticable, and it may be so now; but to-morrow the conditions may have changed, and that which to-day is impossible may become the common order. Let us read with new eyes the Sermon on the Mount, Paul's hymn of love in the thirteenth chapter of his First Epistle to the Corinthians, Peter's conception of the Christian life as a chorus, in which faith, courage, knowledge, self-control, endurance, godliness, brotherly kindness and love make melody unto the Lord, and see how Christianity creates high ideals for us, gives us glimpses of the beautiful in conduct and the sublime in character.

Herbert Spencer, in the preface to his "Data of Ethics," speaks of the Christian ideal as so difficult as to be unattainable. That is the old Pagan spirit which charges us that our faith is only a beautiful dream. Shall we therefore give up our dreams? No; the glory of our faith is in the perfectness of its visions. All hope of indi-

vidual worth and social greatness is in our honest effort to make the ideal real. The saddest fact about our lives is that we become too easily discouraged, and, seeing the difference between what we are and what Jesus Christ commands us to be, we abandon effort, and treat our vision as a common thing. There is no tragedy comparable with this,—the human heart a deserted sanctuary; the inner light aflame no longer; amidst all the music of the spheres, no voice from heaven; amidst all the glories of earth and sea and sky, no Divine vision. The universe is empty then, and life is vain. "He who hath lost God hath nothing more to lose,—he hath lost all. He who hath gained God hath nothing more to gain,—he hath gained all."

XVI

THE ATHENIAN ALTAR

"Within the walls of the southern city—and Peking consists of three—is a parklike inclosure, three miles in circumference. Its interior is occupied by avenues of forest trees, tangled woodlands, and open stretches of coarse grass. Within several walls, at the gate of each of which a small fee is demanded, in a silent, lonely space, where neither the din of the city nor the cries of children penetrate, arises the famous Altar of Heaven, unrivaled by all altars beside. It rests massively on the broad bosom of the earth; bare to heaven; solitary, majestic, unattended; a solid pile of white marble, which reminded me of nothing so much, for absolute impressiveness, as Stonehenge. Imagine a complete circle of pure white marble, ninety feet across, as though concentric with the horizon, and elevated in its solid mass some sixty feet above the earth. On the south and north its level surface is reached by flights of stately steps, each broken into three terraces of nine, representing man, earth, and heaven. On the occasion of his annual visit, the emperor approaches from a distant door, alights from his chair, walks slowly through long lines of state officials, ascends the southern stairway, and makes his way as a suppliant to the central stone, a perfect circle. He kneels there reverently before four pillars of bronze, on which sundry small offerings of incense and silk are placed, whilst a whole bullock is being burnt in a great furnace faced with green porcelain, which stands on the grass below. Thus he intercedes for his land, with 'the Almighty Ruler of Heaven,' as though he were another Melchizedek.

"We stood on that stone with profound reverence. It is recorded of Dr. Legge, that, on reaching this spot, he was overcome with emotion, took off his boots, because it seemed holy ground, and said, 'If ever God has been worshiped in China, He has been worshiped here.'

"Very few Europeans have seen that tablet; but we had the pleasure of being accompanied by Rev. Mr. Rhys, of L.M.S., who is one of that fortunate number. Accompanied by Gilmour of Mongolia, on one occasion he scaled the inclosing walls at an unfrequented part, and saw that eloquent witness of the unappeasable demand of the human heart for the Living God."

(F. B. Meyer. *Letter from Peking,* British Weekly, September 30, 1909.)

XVI

THE ATHENIAN ALTAR

"For as I passed by, and beheld your devotions, I found an altar with this inscription, TO THE UNKNOWN GOD. Whom therefore ye ignorantly worship, Him declare I unto you." Acts xvii. 23.

There is hardly a man in the world, however little he may value culture, however highly he may value time, who would not give the best year of his life to see Athens,—Athens restored, Athens as she was in the days when she was "the eye of Greece, the mother of arts and eloquence." The nearest modern approach to that Athens was the White City on the banks of Lake Michigan in 1893. A Greek archbishop saw that splendid creation of architecture and exclaimed, "This is like the Athens of my ancestors." Yet it was not Athens; it lacked Athenians. What were Athens without her poets and orators, her artists and philosophers? At the Nashville Exposition a dozen years ago, they reproduced the Parthenon in miniature, but it was not the Parthenon,—it lacked the atmosphere and spirit of Hellenism. Thucydides said of Attica, "Her place in history will be measured by her capacity to produce men." What makes a city great and famous with a

worthy fame? The people that inhabit it, the great minds that think, the great hearts that beat, in it,—they give it immortality.

Charles Lamb once said he would have counted it high honor to have been Shakspere's bootblack. Consider the great men that flourished in the latter half of the first century of our era: Pliny, Seneca, Quintilian, Juvenal,—who of us would not rather see these than to see Rome in all her glory? Indeed these were Rome. It was at this time there flourished another man, not a Greek, though acquainted with Greek thought; not a Roman, though a Roman citizen; a Jew, but not a Jew in exclusiveness. He was not a philosopher, as was Seneca; not a historian, as was Pliny; not a critic, as was Quintilian; not a poet, as was Juvenal. There is no term which better describes him than that by which he calls himself, an Apostle of Christ, "Paul, called to be an Apostle." If we might be permitted to see the face, clasp the hand, hear the voice of but one of the great men of that age, few of us would hesitate to choose Paul. In him centers all that is worthiest, all that most concerns the future of the race. He stands for a new philosophy of life, a new revelation of truth, a new order of things.

The text presents a picture of Paul in Athens. He had just come from Berea, where many had "received the word with all readiness of mind." Awaiting the coming of Silas and Timothy, he occupied his time looking about the city. He could not have been indifferent to its classic interest. The

golden age of Athens had passed, yet there was much to remind him of the days of Pericles and Phidias. Yet he was not here as a sight-seer, a relic-hunter, an antiquarian. He was here as the representative of a new religion. "His spirit was stirred in him, when he saw the city wholly given to idolatry." He entered into conversation with students and citizens. He found them curious to know, eager to hear, about "this new doctrine." A multitude of them conducted him to Mars Hill, and requested a full statement of his faith. He complied with their wish and in sentences of truly noble eloquence, proclaimed the great truths of Christianity, concerning God and man. He began: "Ye men of Athens, I perceive that in all things ye are very religious." He did not say, "Ye are too superstitious." He was too great an orator, too skillful a controversialist, too wise a tactician, to begin with an offensive charge. With prudence taught him in the schools of rhetoric, with discretion exampled by his Divine Master, he not only avoided a danger into which an untrained mind might have fallen, but he employed that very danger to draw them to him. "Too superstitious?" Far from it, rather, "Ye are unusually reverent." There were altars all about him, altars to Jupiter, Diana, Apollo, Venus, Ceres, Athena, Juno; altars to graces and furies; alters to Fame, to Energy, to Eloquence. Athens was full of altars. An old traveler tells us there were more altars in Athens than in all the rest of the world. A Roman satirist said, "It is

easier to find a god in Athens than to find a man." But with all their altars and their gods, they felt the need of something higher and truer. They were groping after something better than the best they had. So they erected an altar and wrote upon it, "TO THE UNKNOWN GOD." It was a confession of the failure of their faith to satisfy the deepest longings of the soul. So Paul used their confession, saying,—"Whom therefore ye ignorantly worship, Him declare I unto you." It was the act of a consummate orator, "wise as a serpent, yet harmless as a dove."

There are men who, standing where Paul stood, would have charged the Athenians boldly with folly and unreasonableness. The sight of all those altars would have awakened their indignation. But, to Paul, the whole Pagan world was as a blind man groping in a world of night, leaning on a frail reed. He would not strike from their hands their only staff. He would offer them a better. He sought for some faint footstep of the living God, and found it at that altar to the Unknown God. To the Greeks he became a Greek that he might win some. His theme that day was "The Unknown God." His propositions were, Though God may be unknown, He is not unknowable; and, He has revealed Himself in Jesus Christ. Indeed, in some form or other, this was always Paul's thesis,—that it is possible to know God through Jesus Christ. This is the message of the Gospel to the world to-day,—that we may know Him, know that He is, know how near He

is, know that we are in harmony with Him, know the moral impulse of His spirit and the inward uplift of His everlasting arms.

The battle of Christianity to-day is not so much with atheism, which denies the existence of God, as with agnosticism, which affirms the unknowability of God. The modern Athenian has built him an altar, and inscribed upon it, "To the Unknowable God." The agnostic is perfectly willing to admit that there may be a God, and that He may be, metaphysically, all that we say He is; but if He is, we have no means of knowing it; if there is a spiritual world and a future life, we have no means of verifying them; we may hope and wish and dream, but this is not knowledge. So speaks the modern Athenian, and he seems so modest and humble, so candid and truth-seeking, he attracts multitudes of disciples.

Consider for a moment what kind of a God agnosticism is willing to admit there may be,—a God with metaphysical properties only. Why not ascribe to Him moral qualities as well? Grant the existence of such a God, One Who is not only eternal but merciful, not only wise but compassionate, and, by so much as He is compassionate, He must reveal Himself to men who need a knowledge of Him more than they need anything else in the world. If God could be without moral qualities, we might never know Him, but, being good, He is under the necessity of His own nature to reveal Himself to men. And, we believe He does reveal Himself in Nature, in the Moral Law, in

History, in the Holy Scriptures, and in His Incarnate Son.

"The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament showeth His handywork." Infinite Wisdom, Infinite Power, Infinite Beauty,—these are the revealing of God in creation. "A Power not ourselves which makes for righteousness,"—so God speaks to us from depths of our own being. An Invisible Force, moulding nations, lifting up one and casting down another, operating now through Cyrus of Persia, and now through Alexander of Macedon, to do the will of the King of kings,—so God speaks to us in history. Then there is this Book. No man can read it long and seriously without discovering in it a Spirit rebuking sin, teaching noble reverence for things above us, sincere respect for things about us, wholesome fear of things below us; a Spirit fostering hope, whispering peace, silencing the lips of pain, discovering to us our own best gifts and life's consummate crown. No man can read this Book carefully and candidly without discovering in it intimations of a final revelation, a revelation of God to men, by which those who are blind to nature's message, deaf to the call of conscience, and dead to the lessons of history, may see, must see, that God is a Father and that we are His children.

The highest revelation of life to life is vital, not mechanical, not philosophical, not epistolary. How does a friend reveal himself to you? By his workmanship, by his gifts, by correspondence, it

may be. Then, last and best, the friend, the lover, presents himself, knocks for admission at your heart's door. That is the revelation of life and love. How does a mother reveal herself to her child? As nurse, as protector, as teacher, as everything a mother can be, until some day it dawns upon the unfolding soul that motherhood, brooding, sacrificial motherhood, is more than a mere force; it is a life.

So God reveals Himself to us, first as Cause, as Designer, as Intelligence, as Beauty, and Order, and Righteousness. But, in the fullness of time, a star glides out of the East to guide us to a Cradle. What is there? The beginning of the revelation of Immortal Life, of Deathless Love, of God no longer unknown, no longer dimly perceived, but the unveiled light of His glory in the face of Jesus Christ. Hail, Babe of Bethlehem! Hail, Man of Galilee! On this altar we will write Thy name, and it shall be called, "Wonderful, Counsellor, the mighty God, the everlasting Father, and the Prince of Peace."

There are three distinct types of men, classified as to their knowledge of God. There are those to whom there is no God. They have shut Him out of their lives. No spiritual message comes to them out of all the universe. For them "the Great Companion is dead." And the explanation is in Bushnell's well known phrase, "Religious capacity extirpated by disuse." A peculiar meaning attaches to the word "fool" in the psalmist's characterization of one who said in his heart,

"There is no God." It signifies, "empty, faded, withered." So the person referred to is not a fool in the common sense of the term, a thoughtless, shallow, unreasoning mind. Much less is he an imbecile, incapable of thought. The world may call him wise; he may be a scholar, a philosopher. But, bright as his mind may be, something has occurred to wither up the faculties by which God is apprehended.

Then there are those to whom God is unknowable. Denying the human possibility of knowledge of the Divine, they have closed and barred the doors of their minds to evidences of His revelation. Somewhere in their lives there may be an altar to the Unknown God. When they feel the need of Divine fellowship, they are at the altar of the Unknown God. When the longing for immortality, "leaps like an angel from the temple of their hearts" it is the soul's cry to the Unknown God. When sorrows come, as sorrows must come in a world where death swings his scythe in every summer breeze and every winter blast, and when they crave comfort such as no earthly power can give, they are reaching out their hands toward the Unknown God.

But there are others to whom God is, to whom He is knowable, and to whom He is known. It fell to the lot of Helen Keller to hear from the lips of Phillips Brooks her first clear message as to God. He made very plain his doctrine of God's personality and of His care for us. She understood what he said, and replied, "I knew all that,

but I did not know His name." She had known Something as the sum of all goodness, the object of all devotion, the sky out of which and the sea into which the stream of her life was flowing. Her thoughts had gone out to Him, and returned in ways she did not understand, but in ways that brought a strange sense of peace and joy. Whom, ignorantly she had worshipped, she came to know as God.

There is a realm in which God comes near to us, and becomes at once the most intimate and the most extensive fact in all our experience. Out on the desert of Arabia, far from the nation that knew God best, we hear the voice of Eliphaz, in the Book of Job, urging us, "Acquaint now thyself with Him, and be at peace." Again, on the plains of Judea, a Man is speaking to His disciples about God. He does not argue that God is; He takes that for granted. He seems to be very sure of God. His voice has the accent of earnestness and authority. God is more real to Him than any other fact or force. And strange to say, His conviction of things unseen is so contagious that when He speaks those who hear Him have no doubt. He says, "This is life eternal to know God and Jesus Christ Whom He hath sent." A new note in the music of the world is sounded, and its melody lifts us in spirit to fellowship with Him. Strangest of all phenomena in the realm of religion is this, that fellowship with Him produces upon us exactly the effect of fellowship with God. Things that are equal to the same thing

are equal to each other. Once He said, "No man knoweth . . . the Father, save the Son," and then He added, "and he to whomsoever the Son shall reveal Him." So, since Jesus Christ has come, and has not withdrawn His presence from the world, the Infinite is not unknown, the Eternal is not silent, and Faith is something more than a bridge of sighs across the gulf of Time and Death.

"In Christ I touch the hand of God,
From His pure heights reached down,
By blessed ways before untrod,
To lift us to our crown;
Victory that only perfect is
Through loving sacrifice like His.

"Holding His hand my steadied feet
May walk the air, the seas;
On life and death His smile falls sweet,
Lights up all mysteries;
Stranger nor exile can I be
In new worlds where He leadeth me."

THE END